

The Young Mans Duty. A Discourse

Shewing 2.76.8.

The necessity of seeking the Lord
betimes; as also the Danger and unre-
asonableness in trusting to a late

O R,
Death-bed-Repentance.

Designed especially for *Young Persons*,
before they are debauched by evil
Company, and evil Habits.

The Fourth Edition.

By **R I C H. K I D D E R** M. A.

Τέτο γένος τελείωτης τῷ οὐρανῷ, τὸ πάσαιν ἡμίρεαν
οι πελευθερίαν διεξάγουν. Marc. Antonin. lib.7

L O N D O N,

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Half Moon in St. Pauls Church-
yard, 1677.

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T H E



Preface.

AH E Author of these Papers does easily foresee, that this following Discourse will not be welcome to sundry sorts of Readers: As for those that are curious, and that are pleased only with *Novelties*, he expects to be despised by such. For he knows, that these *Athenians* spend

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their time in hearing or telling some new thing , and he will not wonder that these men should call him *Babler*. Nor does he much value the Censures of those men that had rather be *learned* than *holy*. But yet he hopes , if the following discourse carry with it *truth* , that he shall not deserve a Censure , because it is not *trim* as well as *true* : For as he was at first cast upon these Meditations , to supply the necessities of such as required all plainness of speech , so it is now made publick for the benefit of such : And if to any such , whose hearts are better than their heads , this Treatise shall afford any spiritual advantage , the Author will most chearfully undergo the scorn of the more curious Reader ; since his design in publishing these things

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things was, not to entertain the Reader with quaint and airy forms of speech, but, faithfully to represent to him the great necessity of reformation in heart and life. And certainly, it would be a great piece of vanity in so weighty a matter as this ^{is}, to flourish with affected and ostentatious forms of speech : And some men would question the truth of what we say, if we should dress our Discourses in such a Pedantry as Boyes do their Declamations. That man would be very cruel that should see his Neighbours house on fire, but yet would not give his Neighbour notice of his danger, till he had studied a quaint speech to deliver the sad tidings with. When the flames of Hell are approaching apace to the men we preach to,

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the danger will command us to be *earnest*, but not oblige us to be *eloquent*. We must rather do as the Angels did by *Lot*, who instead of holding him with an eloquent Harangue, told him plainly of the danger that did approach, and while he lingred, laid their hands on him, and brought him out of the City.

To others this following Discourse will be unwelcom; not only because it hath been so hardy to come abroad in publick, when there are so many Books already that can find no entertainment: But also because this Argument hath already been handled by men of great worth and name. And indeed it cannot be denied that the world is too full of Books, and that this subject hath been insisted on by men of great abi-

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abilities. But then every one does not meet with what hath been said, nor can every one understand them, and there are very few that heed them, and yet is the thing it self of very great concernment to the souls of men. And indeed, considering how frequently men delude themselves with a promise of death-bed Repentance, and how they transgress in the mean time, and make their Accounts swell; and the Author having had too much sad experience in the prevailing of this conceit among those that have been committed to his care, thought himself obliged to bear witness against such a mistake as is at once both very common and very pernicious.

But there is another sort of Readers, who though they may

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peruse the things that are here offered , and let them pass without a censure, will not be perswaded to an effectual and speedy Reformation. The most undenialble Reasons, the most passionate Exhortations, the most earnest intreaties will not prevail with them presently to forsake all their sins , and to love and serve God. They will still put the evil day far from them , and promise themselves *time* and *grace* enough to repent hereafter ; and if one should rise from the *dead*, and from the *damned*, yet would they not be perswaded to make haste. These men are buried in sensual delights and pleasures , and have acquainted themselves with those things only that gratifie and please the animal life , they have been brought up in sin and foolish pleasures

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pleasures, and taught to admire the pomp and gaiety of this present world, and to pursue earnestly the designes of their pride, and lust, and covetousness, and think that a little after-care about their souls, a few hopeful words at last will satisfie Almighty God for all. They know some care must be taken about their souls before they die ; that they must repent and amend, and this they resolve to do some time before their death.

I shall not forbear to say something to such a man that thus de lays his repentance, over and above what he may find in the ensuing Discourse, by which it will appear, however he may deceive his own soul, that when he puts off his repentance to hereafter, in all probability he will never repent.

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repent at all, but die in his sins, and be miserable to all eternity. And to convince such a man, that this may very justly be presumed and feared, I shall desire him to consider with me the following severals, which will make it very probable, that whereas he says he will repent hereafter, that yet he will never repent at all.

[1.] Consider, thou that sayest thou wilt repent *hereafter*, what should be the reason why thou canst not do it *now*; and whether the very same reason that hinders thee from reforming *now*, will not *always* hinder thee: Say what it is, thou that makest these delays, that keeps thee from reforming presently; is it the want of power to do it, and how dost thou know thy ability will be greater hereafter than now? Is it

it because the Rules of the Gospel are severe and strict , and will they not be as severe hereafter as now they are ? Or dost thou hope, that God will unbend his Laws , which are unalterable , and stoop to thy profaneness ? Or dost thou delay thy amendment , because thy sins are many and great, and thou despairest of mercy ? And will not the heap be as great hereafter as now ? Is it thy worldly business , and will it not always be so ? That which now hinders thee will always do so, till it is taken out of the way : things standing as they are, the issue and event must needs be the same. That which makes thee unfit to day , will make thee as unfit to morrow ; Nay

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[2.] More unfit. Thou art

Citius sibi plagarum caro sociatur quod non diu hiare permittitur.
Salv. ad Eccl. Cath. l. I.

like to be more unfit every day than other. It is here as in a wound or sore, the longer it continues, the more

hard it is to cure it, whereas a timely dressing may cure it quickly: A disease that is timely taken is easily cured; but if it stay till it have altered the blood, and have amassed together a load of filth, and destroyed the tone and strength of the principal parts, and brought in a general ill habit of body; it may then be past all remedy. Whatever unfits thee now, will make thee much more unfit hereafter. For as the work will then be more hard, so will thy strength be weaker, thy time shorter, thy discouragements greater

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greater , and thy temptations and objections more and more strong than they were before. He that thinks of repenting on his death-bed, should remember that he will have a greater task to do, and less time and strength to do it in than now he hath.

If thy sins are so many and so great now , that thou dost almost despair of mercy , certainly they will be more and greater then : if it be trouble som to thee now to look back upon thy old scores, surely there will be more of labour and discouragement in it, to undo and unravel the many sins of a long life : if now thou thinkest the Commands of Christ severe and strict , certainly hereafter , when thou hast been more engaged in sin , and longer wedded to the world , and thylusts are faster riveted to thy soul , thou wilst

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wilt think more hardly of a holy life,
and the Commands of Christ will be
more grievous to thee. If now it be
so hard a task, what wilt thou think
it when thy day is almost spent, and
thy Sun a setting! If it be hard
now to cast out the unclean spirit,
and bind the strong man, what a
task will it be when there are more
evil spirits to cast out? If the E-
thiopian can change his skin, or
the Leopard his spots, then may
ye also do good, that area ccu-
stomed to do evil.

[3.] Consider. thou that sayest
thou wilt repent hereafter, whe-
ther thou hast not formerly promised
to repent, and yet broken thy word;
and if thou hast, why shouldest thou
believe thy self again! Didst thou
never upon some sick bed, or under
some great danger, make a Vow,
that if God would deliver thee, he
should

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should be thy God, and yet for all that, when the danger hath been over, thou hast returned to thy sins and evil ways again. And hast thou not as much reason as ever to think; that as thou didst then but dissemble with God, so now thou didst but mock him. Thy deceitful heart is still in thy breast, and as ready to impose upon thee as ever it was.

[4.] Consider, thou that sayest thou wilt repent to morrow, when this morrow will come: Thou wilt repent hereafter thou sayest, but that is an uncertain and unlimited word, whereas God limiteth a certain day, saying, To day if ye will hear his voice, Heb. 4.7. And again, Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation, Cor. 6.2. God says Now, we say Hereafter: God says

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says to day ; we say , to morrow :
Gods time is come , but when will
our time come ? It is a worthy say-
ing of one of the Ancients , "Auger
 $\ddot{\alpha} \ddot{\sigma} \pi \ddot{\tau} \ddot{\sigma} \tau \ddot{\lambda} \alpha \mu \beta \dot{\alpha} \nu \tau \ddot{\iota} \ddot{\alpha}$. That , to
morrow hath no end . And it were

Modū & modū
non habent
modum . Aug. well if it were not
too often verified in
the dangerous delay
of sinners , whose to morrow and
hereafter bath many times no
bounds or stops , and is as far from
coming to an end , as an eternity it
self . For he that makes delays
makes no progress at all , and is
therefore very elegantly compared
by Solomon , to a door that is turn-
ed upon its hinges , Prou. 26.

14. For as such a door , though it
may be opened and clap'd too , yet
makes no progress at all , being held
by the hinges to which it is fasten-
ed : So the sloathful sinner is held
fast

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fast by his delays till he be unhinged
by a very effectual change. He
that uses delays, how fair so ever
he speak, yet does not advance at
all: He is like the hindermost wheels
of a Chariot or Coach, which are
indeed near the foremost wheels,
and seem to run with a design to o-
vertake them, but yet being fasten-
ed to a lower Axle-tree, they never
make any nearer approaches to them.

Nam quamvis prope te, quamvis
temone sub uno
Vertentem fese, frustra sectabere
canthum,
Cum rota posterior curras & in
axe secundo.

There is no end of these delays;
They are the devils device to draw
thee into an inevitable destruction;
'tis the sluggard that says, Yet a
little

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little sleep, a little slumber; a litt'e folding of the hands to sleep, so shall his poverty come as one that travelleth, and his want as an Armed man. *The Devil can well endure thou shouldest promise to reform hereafter, as long as in the mean time thou livest in thy sins.* But it is a great peradventure whether ever we shall repent or not, if we do not do it presently. For 'tis likely that he that promises to morrow to begin his repentance (and perhaps hath done for some years past,) should, when to morrow comes promise the next day, and so onwards till there be no time left to run out. This is well express by the Satyrist.

Cras

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Cras hoc fiet idem ; cras fiet ;
quid quasi magnum
Nempe diem donas ? Sed cum lux
altera venit,
Jam cras hesternum consumsimus ;
Ecce aliud cras
Egerit hos annos, & semper pau-
lum erit ultra.

To morrow shall my work be done,
Or, when to morrow's past and
(gone.)
The next day shall my morrow be,
A day shall break no squares with
(me,
He grants too little that doth give
But one day both to turn and live.

But

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*But when another day's come on,
Our first to morrow's fled and
(gone ;
Another morrow then makes hast,
And our remaining time doth wast :
And thus we make no stops, but say
We still expect another day.*

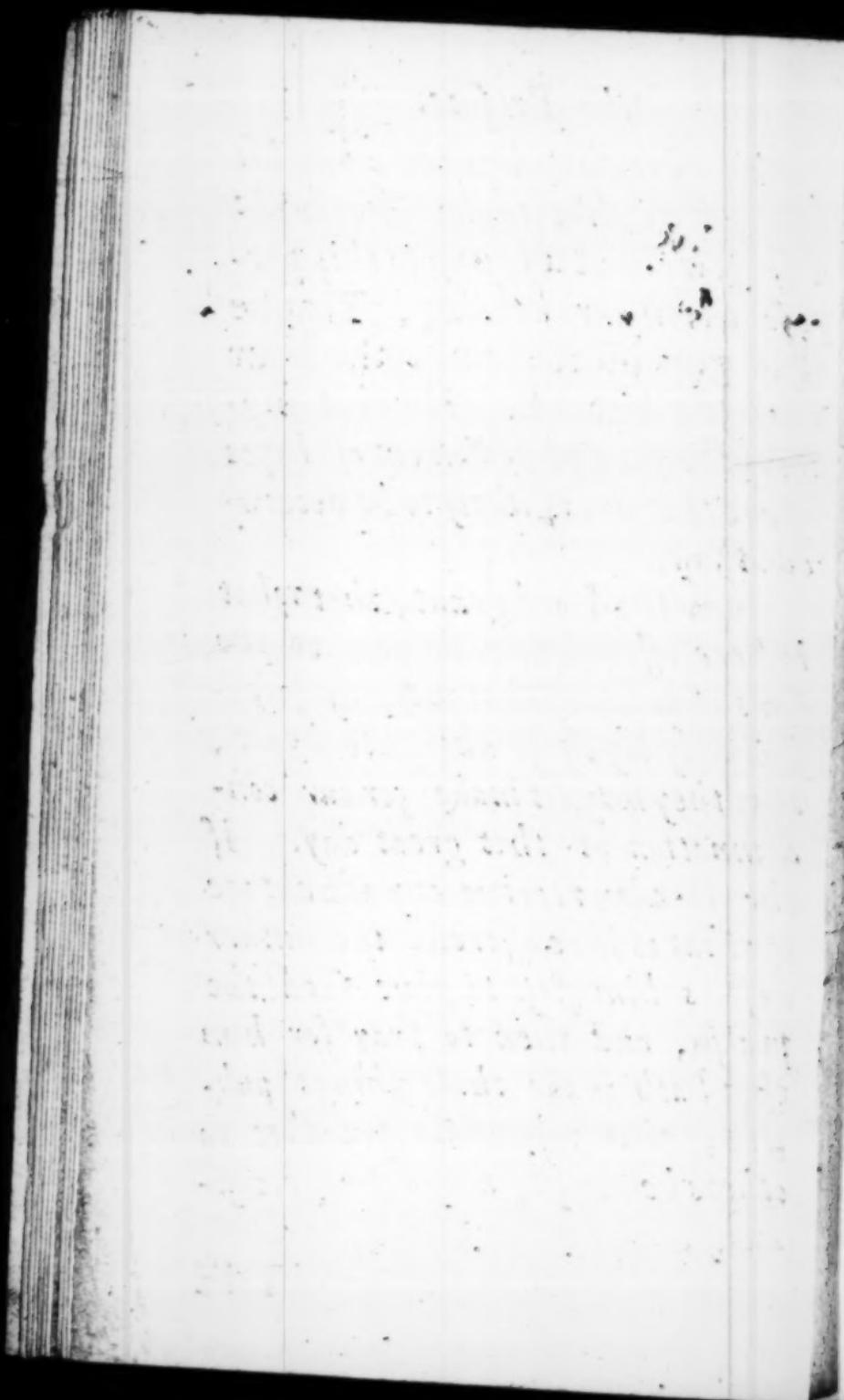
*And therefore I shall earnestly
beseech the Reader to use no more
vain delays, but to hasten out of his
sins, and immediately to turn unto
the Lord his God, who will be
better to him than all his worldly
profits and pleasures can. This
if he do at all, he must do it quickly :
We must tread upon thorns
while our shoes are upon our feet :
There can be no fitter opportunity
than the present to set upon this
work*

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work. He that depends upon his last hour is like to be deceived: The Jews have a saying to this purpose worth our heeding, That he that puts off the hour, the hour shall put him off. He that neglects the present season out of hopes of one to come, is likely to be deceived at last.

Now the Lord grant, that what is here offered may do good to the souls of men. That we may so effectually lay these things to heart, that they may not make for our condemnation at that great day. If the Reader receive any advantage by what is here offered, the Author desires him first to give God the praise, and then to pray for him that hath made these things publick, that when he preaches to others he himself may not be a cast-away.

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Young-Mans DUTY,

&c.



Here cannot be a more dangerous, nor is there a more prevailing error amongst those that call themselves Christians than this, that though we lead our lives as we list, yet we shall be undoubtedly happy hereafter, if upon our Death-beds it repent us of our sins; when yet by repenting we mean no more, but a crying unto God for mercy, and a crying out upon our selves as great sinners: If we can, like the Serpent, become streight before we die, though our whole life were crooked and perverse,

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we shall think well of our selves, and shall be thought to have made a godly and comfortable end, and to be unquestionably gone to a better place. Thus will a charitable Neighbourhood judge, and perhaps the Preacher too at the Funerals will confidently pronounce it, and then tis easily believed ; and every sinner comforts up himself in his evil ways, and thinks to get to Heaven at last at as cheap a rate. By this means the great purposes of the Gospel are made void, and the design of our Saviours appearing, defeated : Men think a good life is not of absolute necessity in order to their future happiness, and they take no longer care how they live, the most they aim at is, that they may die with a parcel of good words in their mouths. They run on in their sins in the mean while, and think it will be soon enough to repent when they make their Wills, or when they lie a dying : Thus the poor sinner is blinded, and makes haste to fill up the measure of his iniquity, and repents not till he do it with the Flames of Hell about

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bout him, till it be too late , and to no purpose. Many that are now in eternal torments, made hast to them with these foolish hopes about them: And we that remain behind them are posting on apace to the same lamentable destruction ; I shall endeavour, with Gods assistance, to disabuse such men as these, and to shew them their great mistake, before they feel the sad effects of it in sorrows that are unspeakable. I shall shew the very great untruth, as well as the unreasonableness, and infinite danger of this conceit , and take off all those popular pretences and exceptions which the sinner can bring to confirm himself in his misbelief. God Almighty grant, that what is offered may be a means to stop the sinner in his career, and send him home to himself, and to his God. I do conjure the Reader, as he loves his own soul, and as he would not be eternally miserable , that he would consider seriously what is here offered , that he would do it in his retirement and calmest thoughts , reflecting how far he is concerned in these

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things : I shall proceed and shew the great vanity of this conceit by sundry Arguments.

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And first of all, this will appear to be a great mistake, if we do but consider duly the nature of true repentance; which (however we thrust it into a narrow room) we shall find to be a duty more difficult & comprehensive, & which requires more time and pains than men are generally apt to believe it does. For though we frequently speak of Repentance, and pretend to it, and hear it preached of, yet, I fear, it is but little understood and less practised ; and when men so little understand what Repentance is, it is no wonder that they mistake so widely in this whole Affair. The doctrine of Repentance is the foundation of the Spiritual building, *Heb.6.1.* which if it be not well laid, we build our house upon the Sands, and such an house must needs fall, *Mat.7.27.* Before I come to shew what Repentance is, I shall

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shall vindicate it from those mistakes
that men are in about it.

I. They are much mistaken that think Repentance no more but a parcel of good words, a loud crying to God for mercy, and exclaiming against our selves as great sinners: This we can easily do, and love our sins nevertheless when we have done; it breaks none of our bones to do this, it puts us to no pain at all, nay, we can do it, and yet be inwardly pleased with our sin in the mean-while; this is all the Repentance that many men have or aim at; they sin, and they confess, but then they sin again, and confess again, and keep this round while they live. Many men do that which a little before they confess was their sin, and they will confess it again presently, and yet go on to commit again the same things. *This black Circle*

*Eadem pend om.
nes jugiter faci-
unt que fecisse
se plingunt.
Salv.de Gub.
Dei lib.3.*

(as one well said) of *Sin*, and confess, Confess and sin, encompasses as well Protestants as Papists. We think our selves

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very safe in this Circle, and that our sins cannot do us more hurt than our confession does us good: But certainly, we have very base & low thoughts of God, if we think to charm and cheat him thus easily, if we think he will be mocked with such ineffectual confessions as these are: What man wou'd endure such usage as this? Will our Neighbour be pleased with us, because we confess we have done him wrong, when he sees we continue to do so still? This were indeed an easie way to Heaven, a very sick man, and the most guilty might soon do this: I shall transcribe the words of a grave Author

Sir. W. Raw.
high his Pre-
face to the
History of the
World.

upon this occasion: If, says he, according to St. Peter, the righteous shall scarcely be saved, and that God spared not his Angels, where shall those appear, who having served their appetites all their lives, presume to think that the severe Commandments of the All-Powerful God were given but in sport, and that the short breath we draw when death presseth us, if we can but fashion it

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to the sound of mercy, is sufficient?-- But what shall we call a disesteeming, an opposing, or (indeed) a mocking of God; if those men do not oppose him, disesteem him and mock him, that think it enough for God, to ask him forgiveness at leisure, with the remainder and last drawing of a malicious breath? For what do they otherwise than die this kind of well-dying, but say unto God as followeth? We beseech thee, O God, that all the falsehoods, forswearings, and treacheries of our lives past, may be pleasing unto thee; that thou wilt for our sakes (that have had no leisure to do any thing for thine) change thy nature (though impossible) and forget to be a just God; that thou wilt love injuries and oppressions, call Ambition, wisdom; and Charity, foolishness.--- Certainly these wise Worldlings have either found out a new God, or made one, and in all likelihood, such a leaden one as Lewis the eleventh wore in his Cap; which when he caused any that he feared or hated to be killed, he would take it from his head, and kiss it, beseeching it to pardon him this

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one evil Act more , and it should be the last ; Mockeries indeed fit to be used towards a leaden, but not towards the ever-living God. Thus he. Certainly , the Devil can well endure we should confess our sins , if we forsake them not ; we shall not much disturb him by speaking against his works , if we destroy them not. These are words of course, that neither trouble the devil, nor yet please God. The Souldier of Christ must fight as well as thus bid defiance against his sins. *Plutarch* tells us, that when *Memnon* heard one of his Souldiers to rail against the *Grecian* King, against whom he was entertained to fight , that

Vide Plat. A- popthezm. he stroke him with his Lance, and told him, *He did not maintain him to rail, but to fight against Alexander.* Certainly we shall shew at once more courage, as well as more sincerity, by forsaking our sins, than by speaking evil of them.

2. They are much mistaken that think all sorrow that arises in their minds, upon

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on occasion of their sins, is true Repentance. As if any sorrow, occasioned by reason of our sins, were that sorrow which is after a godly sort. Such men are ready to think, that a melancholick fit, a few sighs and grones, an hanging down the head like a bulrush, and a retiring a while from our mirth and company, a four face, and moist eyes make up the whole and sum of Repentance. This certainly is a very wide mistake, for though this sorrow may be a step to, or a companion of true Repentance, yet alone it comes much short of the main work. For such men as these many times dislike the punishment, not the fault; and grieve not so much because themselves are wicked, as because God is just. Their sin brings a trouble upon them, it is the *trouble*, not the *sin* that makes them sorrowful. They have a certain Presage of the uneasiness of the flames of Hell, their galled and aking conscience flies in their faces, they feel heavy strokes upon their hearts, for those sins which the world does not see.

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This makes them pale, and dumpish when they receive upon their Souls the lesser strokes of Hell, and when they see the hand-writing point at them.—*Tacitâ sudant præcordia culpa.* This will make the stoutest son of *Anakbend*, and yet does it not make him a true Penitent. For the most wicked men may repent at this rate, and many times doe it: Thus *Judas*, when he had betrayed our Saviour, when he saw he was condemned, *repented himself*, Mat. 27. 3. That is, his Conscience had told him he had done greatly amiss in that *he had betrayed innocent blood*, v. 4. He had a great sorrow upon him, a most excessive grief upon his mind, so great and so pressing, that there are that are ready to think, that (however our Translation tells us, that he went and *hang-ed himself*) he died of *Aπογέω* grief and sorrow, that there was no other thing that strangled and choaked him but that: For it is thought, the word which we translate *hang'd himself*, signifies being oppress'd with

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with grief and melancholy, with a sorrow so far from a godly sorrow, that it worketh death: *Judas* being strangled with his grief and sorrow, when yet no man will think that he had any repentance unto life. Thus we find an *Abraham rending his clothes, putting on sack-cloth upon his flesh, nay, fasting, lying in sack-cloth, and going softly,* 1 Kings 21 27. In so much that God himself takes notice how he humbles himself: Others we may find *bowling upon their beds,* Hos. 7. 14. and yet they are far from true Repentance, for it seems they did *not cry unto God with their hearts;* their want made them howl indeed, but not repent; for they *assembled for corn and wine,* and yet *rebelled against God.* The disgrace, and shame, and misery which the sinners wickedness has brought upon him may make him truly *sorrowful,* when yet he is far from being truly *penitent.* These things may humble the sinner greatly, and this Humiliation may keep off from him some *temporal judgment,* but will not secure him from an *eternal one.*

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3. They are as much mistaken that take passionate resolutions of amendment for Repentance, that mistake the purpose and intention for the thing it self. We are indeed sometimes in good moods, and then we are resolved for Heaven, and for an holier life. Thus it is many times with some men, that notwithstanding all this are slaves to the Devil, and led captive by him at his will. Such men find they are in great slavery, through the chains and fetters with which the Devil and their own lust have bound them; these out of a sense of this are ready to say: *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us.* These men are surfeited by their sins, lashed by their Consciences, terrified by their convictions, or sometimes awakened by the judgments of God that follow them, and then they resolve most passionately to lay by their troublesome sins, and walk in the more pleasant and more lightsome ways of Peace. How happy were it for them if they had courage and constancy enough to

to do what they so well resolve: But alas! these men (though they call these purposes by the name of Repentance) return quickly to their vomit and wallow in the mire: And then their Actions testifie to their faces they did but dissemble with God. These purposes are like the sudden resolutions that some young men take up, that have been intemperate the last meal, to fast the next, because their late excess has laid an uneasie load upon them, which then they find very burdensom; but when time hath wrought off the heaviness of the first excess, they forget their vow of Fasting quickly; what the Apostle said of some, that they are *ever learning*, and yet *never come to the knowledge of the truth*, is true of those men; they are *ever repenting*, and yet *never arrive at true repentance*.

4. They are mistaken that think every outward abstaining from the grosser acts of sin, either deserves the name of Repentance, or that it is any certain sign of it. It is possible we may abstain from some

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some sin, and be as faulty in something else.

—*Non ego avarum
Cum voto te fieri, vappam Horat.
jubeo, aut Nebulonem.*

One disease may leave a man, and yet another may invade and arrest him, which is as dangerous. Men will leave one sin for another, often they may forsake all. And such an exchange may judge very pardonable. They commute some one sin for some other that they esteem more expedient. They leave their youthful lusts perhaps when they grow in years; but then they are slaves to Covetousness or Ambition, or else are overgrown with Atheism or unbelief. Men will part with some sin they can best spare, or not so well follow, and think they have well acquitted themselves, though *Agag* and the fatted of the flock, their most desirable sins, be spared. They will perhaps avoid the grosser enormities which the World observes

serves most , and yet be full of more refined , spiritual and mental wickedness . They will not kill , but yet hate their brother , or are angry with him without a cause . They do not commit adultery but yet they allow themselves to lust . They leave that sin which either they dare not or cannot follow ; and not because they hate their sin , or love their God : Some Vices they abstain from , not out of disaffection , but out of Policy . Some other lust , it may be , has either more power , or more expedience : Nay , perhaps they sacrifice some of their lusts to the Religion they own , which they know exacts an obedience from them : It shall have some sins devoted to destruction that the rest may live : and thus men do not only abstain from some sins , that they may keep others safe , but even strive against them too . *And upon these terms Satan himself (as one hath well said) will allow us to mortifie some sins , nay , will himself cast the first stone at them ; and like a rooking Gamester purposely lose these petty stakes*

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stakes, that he may afterwards sweep the board.

These things I have named, are not worthy the name of Repentance, nor yet are they any certain or infallible signes of it: Though where there is true Repentance, there these things also are; Repentance requires this, and more than all this. It is a greater work, and makes; a greater change than all the before-named particulars do amount unto; it imports no less than a Relinquishing all our sins, and a turning unto God. He that truly repents puts away every evil thing and subdues not only his sin, but his affection to it also. He puts off the Old man, and puts on the New, For Repentance imports.

I. A turning from our sins: *A ceasing to do evil*, Isa.1.16. A leaving off our evil ways, and our evil affections: That is, we must turn from all our evil, from every sin, before we can be said to have repented truly, and not only leave our sin but hate it too: But that this may be the better understood we may

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may take these following particulars.

(1) It is turning from our sin when we have power to commit it. Of many men it may be truly said , that their sin rather leaves them, than they that : To leave off our sin when we can follow it no longer deserves no thanks, much less the name of true Repentance. It is too true an observation of *Siracides* , *There is*, says he, *that is hindred from finning through want* , chap. 20. v. 21. We want strength, or means, or an opportunity and temptation, oftner than we do a will to commit sin. He that follows his lusts till a decrepit age hath put out his fire; He that drinks and games till he hath spent his estate and his credit too: In a word , he that continues in his sin as long as he is able to follow it, does not forsake his sin, but his sin forsakes him. The man is the same though his strength and power be not : His Actions are

Peccare non desinit, quem in extremis situm recessere a criminibus sola facit impossibilitas, non voluntas Salv. ad eccl.Cathol. lib. I.

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not what they were , but his *mind* is : And certainly God looks upon a man as he is in his mind and inclination , not as he is forced to be in his outward carriage . He is a Thief in Gods account (though he actually steal nothing) that would not fear to steal if he were sure that his wickedness might be hid or go unpunished . And he is a drunkard in Gods account , that would commit that excess , were it not that he wanted means , or feared the Magistrate : Where there is true repentance , the forsaking our sin is matter of *choice* , not *necessity* . We do not only abstain from our sins , but we abhor them . Our affection is changed as well as our life . Some men forsake their sins , as sick men do their meat which they love , they are denied it by their Physician as very dangerous for them , and therefore they forbear and yet long for it , and would gladly have the restraint taken off . Such men as these have the same desires as before , and that their actions are not the same also , is not the effect of their *choice* , but the result

result of a pressing necessity. But thus far we are hypocrites and dissemblers, not true penitents. But then that man that turns from his sin in his youth, and in his health, that wants neither power nor wealth to follow his sin, nor an opportunity to use that power, nor yet a temptation to embrace that opportunity, and yet abstains from his sin for no other cause, but because he loves God, and fears his displeasure, and hates his sin, this man truly repents: especially if he add

(2) Constancy to this, some men are very angry with their sins at fits, and for a short time, but by degrees their anger cools, and they run into the embraces of their sins again: They fall out with their sins just as a fond and foolish Lover falls out with his Mistress, when yet *una falsa Lachrymula*, a tear or a fair invitation, a smile or sigh shall make up this breach, and the man is then as fond and as foolish, as much a slave and servant as he was before. We are in little feuds and bickerings against our sins,

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sins, but they rise to no height, and continue no time. 'Tis our continuing in well-doing that speaks our repentance to be compleat. Many men are ready to think themselves free, who yet draw their chain after them, and are easily overcome by *Sin in fair Circumstances*, Heb. 12. 1. When their sin comes to them well arraid and attired, when it courts them, and importunately wo's them, when it comes to them, as Jael did to Sisera, with a *Turn in, my Lord, turn unto me, fear not,* Judg. 4.18. When it comes to the sinner like the strange Woman, Prov. 5. 3. Whose lips drop as an Honey-comb, and her Mouth smoother than Oyle: And makes an earnest proffer of pleasure and profit, an *All this Ile give thee*; then the sinner falls into the embraces of his sins again, and becomes a Vassal and a slave again, and his love to his sin is, after his little quarrels with it, redintegrated and made strong: Such mens affections to their sins were never throughly subdued and mortified, their repentance was never perfect

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perfect and compleat. Know ye not (says the Apostle) *that to whom ye yield your selves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness,* Rom. 6. 16. Not that I would be so understood, but that a man that hath truly repented may fall into some sins again, through infirmity or ignorance, through sudden surreption or surprise, and sometimes through negligence and want of due care and watchfulness. But then.

(3) This is against the constant bent and meaning, the bias and inclination of the man: 'Tis that which he constantly and earnestly desires to avoid and shun: He looks upon it as his great misery and unhappines. And.

(4) He rises again by a true repentance, by an hearty and godly sorrow; if *Peter deny his Master*, we soon find that he goes out and *weeps bitterly*; if such a man miss his way, yet he turns back again, and renewes his pace, and doubles his diligence, and returns home to his father again, and this leads me to the

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the sccond part of Repentance viz.

II. A turning to God : *I will go to my father*, says the Prodigal son ; and this may be called *Conversion* : But that we may the better understand what is implied in this, we may take the import of it in the following severals. Now this turning to God does comprehend in it and suppose together.

(1) A due sight and fence of the danger and misery of our present condition that we are in, and here it begins. The sinner begins to consider now what he does, and whither he is going, he begins to discern his danger and misery. He is like a man newly awakened out of a deep sleep, when the house about him is on fire, when the building trembles, and the Neighbourhood cries out, and the flames begin to threaten him, and the man sees that danger which his sleep but now hid from his eyes. He sees himself now upon the very brink of Hell, and very near being devoured and swallowed up by those unquenchable flames. **A fire from Heaven he sees**

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is falling upon his *Sodom*, and the avenger of blood he sees is following him, and his Soul is in great distress for a City of Refuge to flee unto. He is like a traveller in a foreign Land, that hath wandered securely from his right way, and is strayed into paths of very great hazard and danger, which makes him doubtful and at a stand. His heart misgives him, and he now begins to consider with himself whither his way will lead him: He suspects his way too broad, and too much beaten to be that way that leads to life: He remembers now that he hath heard his Saviour say, that the way is narrow and strait that leads to life, and that there be but few that find it: And he now remembers that God hath told him that the paths that he treads in will bring him unto death. He remembers that it is plainly said, that *without Holiness no man shall see God*, *Heb. 12. 14.* And then he considers what a sad portion of things abides for him, how unable he is to lie down in everlasting burnings, and to lose the favour

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vour of God for ever , whose favour is better than life it self : He knows there is but a very little distance between him and eternal destruction , and that if God take away his life he is undone for ever , and that nothing in this world can countervail so great a loss as the favour of God, and the eternal welfare of his Soul. Thus does the Convert begin his Conversion : Thus the Psalmist did , *I brought upon my waies,* (says he) *and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies , Psal 119. 59.* And the Prodigal son did thus also , he made this the first step towards his amendment , for of him the first good tidings , and hopeful presage we met with is that which we read , *Luke 15. 17. When he came to himself , he said , how many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough , and to spare , and I perish with hunger.*

(2) A firm resolution of turning to God. *I will arise and go to my father ;* says the Prodigal Son : And this resolution the true Penitent does not take

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up lightly and rashly neither , as many do that soon repent them of their repen-tance ; but upon mature consideration he is resolved for God and Heaven what e-ver it cost him ; though he pluck out his right eye, and cut off his right hand. That is , though he part with his most beloved sins : He will have the Pearl though he sell all he have , and endure great hardship to obtain it. He is wil-ling to accept of Jesus Christ as his Lord and Master , as well as his Priest and Saviour : That is, he is as willing to be ruled by Christ as to be saved by him. He resolves to obey his Saviour , and to follow him through all difficulties and dangers. He will not leave him though others do , though his Friends and Re-latives , the wife of his Bosom, or the son of his strength forsake him : and serve other Gods : Just as it was with *Rutb* , so it is with the true Penitent. She would not leave *Naomi* , though she not only bid her turn back, and discour-aged her besides , and though her Si-ster *Orpha* returned unto her people, and

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to her Gods. But she tells her, *Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God ; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried*, Ruth 1. 11. 12. He that repents does so, he will follow Christ whither ever he shall lead him, to a Crofs or to a Stake, to a barren wilderness, or to a place of Skulls, through afflictions and tribulations. He will part with Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Sisters, and life it self, rather than not be his disciple, Luke 14. 26. 33. For he confiders, like a wise Builder, that this undertaking may cost him no less than all this. There are indeed but few such Converts as these, I fear, yet do none deserve the name that do not do this. Many indeed partake of the Baptism of Christ receive of his Body and Blood, that will do nothing for him. There are many that follow him for the loaves, that will not follow him to the Crofs ; they will cleave to Christ while he feeds them, but

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but when he commands their estates or lives , they, like the *Gadarens*, for losſ of an herd of Swine, desire him to depart out of their Coasts , *Mat. 8. 34.* or they do as the Ruler in the Gospel did , who when our Saviour told him he must ſell all and give to the Poor, *He went away sorrowful , for he was ver-ry rich , Luke 18. 23.* But the true Convert counts all but dross that he may gaini Christ , and he is ſo far convinced of his misery , without the mercy of God and light of his Countenance, that he is willing to accept of this mercy up- on any terms : And therefore he re- ſolves to turn to God without any re- ſerves what ever : He ſets before his eyes all the difficulties and discour- ages- ments he may meet with , and re ſolves with Gods strength to undergo them all that he may obtain the prize.

(3) An actual and entire re ſignation of a mans ſelf unto God : And this is that which perfects and compleats our Repentance. When we come to give God our hearts , which we formerly

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to her Gods. But she tells her, *Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried*, Ruth 1. 11. 12. He that repents does so, he will follow Christ whither ever he shall lead him, to a Cross or to a Stake, to a barren wilderness, or to a place of Skulls, through afflictions and tribulations. He will part with Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Sisters, and life it self, rather than not be his disciple, Luke 14. 26. 33. For he considers, like a wise Builder, that this undertaking may cost him no less than all this. There are indeed but few such Converts as these, I fear, yet do none deserve the name that do not do this. Many indeed partake of the Baptism of Christ receive of his Body and Blood, that will do nothing for him. There are many that follow him for the loaves, that will not follow him to the Cross; they will cleave to Christ while he feeds them, but

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(3) An actual and entire resignation of a mans self unto God : And this is that which perfects and compleats our Repentance. When we come to give God our hearts , which we formerly

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set upon the World and upon our sins, then have we truly repented , and not till then. For he that hath truly repented becomes a new man , he hath bid an everlasting farewell to all his evil waies , to all his old familiars in Egypt, and is now transplanted and engraffed into a new Family ; and when he remembers his former evil ways , it is with tears in his eyes , or true sorrow in his heart , when he thinks how foolish he hath been. Now he hath left his former customs , company and pleasures : He is married into a new Family, he hath contracted a new Kindred and Relatives: He obeys another Master , and is ruled by other Laws , and is conducted by a better spirit , and hath vowed obedience to another and a better Lord : His Covenants are sealed , and he hath bound himself by all that is sacred or great to an universal obedience , and he cannot return or draw back without a strange destruction. He is notthe same man which he was, other Lords have had dominion over him

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him , he hath been enslaved by his vile affections and lusts, but he is now made free by the Son of God , and he that was before a slave of sin is now a Servant of Righteousness. In a word. *All old things are done away, and all things are become new.* There is a very great and remarkable change passed upon him

i. Upon his mind and understanding : For God works upon the understanding first , and does in this new creature use the same method , which he did when he created the World at first , where we find that light was the work of the first day, *Gen. 1. 3.* before that light was made there was a great darkness upon the face of the deep , till God by the light he made had chased it away. It is just so with the natural and unregenerate man , he is in a very great darkness till the eyes of his mind are opened : And the Apostle seems to tell us that God makes a *new* creature after the same manner that he made the *old*, in these words: *For God*

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who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 4. 6. Our blessed Saviour, who is the true light, John. 1. 9. came into the World, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of Peace, Luke. 1. 79. While the sinner goes on in his evil way he walks in darkness: *The God of this World blinds his mind, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ Who is the Image of God, should shine unto him*, 2. Cor. 4. 4. Ye were sometimes darkness (says the Apostle to his Ephesians) but now are ye light in the Lord, Eph. 5. 8. Saint Paul himself was sometimes darkness also, I verily thought with my self, that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, Acts 26. 9. But it pleased God to enlighten him from Heaven with a light greater than that of the Sun, and then he becomes a Minister of that which before he persecuted, and

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and is sent to open mens eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light , and from the power of Satan unto God.v.18. And so it is with every man that is converted from his evil waies to God : A great light breaks in upon his understanding : His mind before was darkned, and he is now like a man that comes out of a dark dungeon, or like one that never saw before , or never saw distinctly and clearly: But now the scales are fallen off his eyes, the veil is removed , and he is restored to sight. He sees now that his sin is no small matter , and that he is of all fools the most deplorable that makes a mock of sin: He sees that all wickedness is folly, and that the fear of the Lord is the greatest wisdom: He sees that the Gos-pel is a great truth , and that he that preaches it hath all the reason in the World to be very earnest and importunate : He sees that Hell is no Fable, but the most necessary and unavoidable Consequent of a wicked life. Now he sees that God will by no means clear the

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guilty , and that he is not so merciful as to forget to be just : He sees now how wofully the Devil abused him , in leading him aside into the ways of sin , and misconceits of God and of Religion. He sees that he hath been a fool , and walked alwaies upon the borders of Hell, and, had not the mercy of God laid hold of him , he had never seen it till it had been too late. In a word , he sees that he hath *no fruit in those things whereof he is now ashamed*, *for the end of those things is death*, Rom. 6.21.

2. Upon his will and heart , the bent and inclination of that is much changed and altered ; his heart is now right in the sight of God : He had noavour or relish of the things of God that stay'd with him before: So that when he prayed with his lips, his heart stay'd behind, and though he had many notices of things swimming in his head yet he had no relish of them in his heart : His good principles were weak and ineffectual , and he lived as altother unconcerned in them: He could indeed

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deed before this great change was wrought , acknowledge God the Fountain of all goodness , and the Root from whom every good thing did spring , yet then he did not live as if this were true , but still loved his sin and pleasure more than his God . But now he tastes and sees that the Lord is gracious , and what service he performs to God , he does it heartily : When he prayed to God before , he was like some Clock that strikes right indeed , but yet the hand of it points amiss , and not at the same hour that its striking gave you warning of : He prayed before , as to the matter of his Petitions , very uniformly and agreeably , but his heart was not right in the sight of God , that pointed at something else , and at something short of what his words did import . Thus

St. Austin confesses of himself that he was Aug. Conf.
wont to pray to God to I. 8. c. 7.

give him Chastity and Continence , (and that was a good hearing) but then his heart staid behind with a not yet Lord ,

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his heart did not point so forward ; for he confesses, that when he prayed thus, he was afraid that God should hear him speedily . St. Paul prayed doubtless before his Conversion , for he was a very strict *Pharisee* , but he did not pray as he did after God had brought him home to himself ; when the Lord tells *Ananias* of his praying, with a *Behold he prays*, *Act 9. 11.* The sinner prays perhaps for the same things that the true Convert does , but not so earnestly and so heartily. He prays for the holy Spirit as a very hungry man prays for bread , when he begs Wisdom of God, *He seeks her as Silver, and searches for her as for hid treasures* , *Prov. 2. 4.* In a word , he does not only perform an outward worship to God , but he loves him with all his heart , and is inwardly delighted in his service.

3. Upon his whole life also. He lived after the guise and fashion of the World before : He hath now left his o'd wonts , his sin and his evil company. He talks of other matters , he thinks

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thinks of other things, and is delighted with other concerns: He that before delighted in nothing but Merchandise, or Farms and Leases, and Yokes of Oxen, in mirth and jolly Company; in Chambring and Wantonness, Honour and Greatness, now delights in God, and in his Gospel: And does really value a *Promise* above a great *Lease* or *Bond*, and is more afraid of Gods displeasure than of a *Famine* or *Plague*.

Thus I have shewed what true Repentance does imply: He that would enter into Heaven must thus be changed: No less than all this is indispensibly required of us; which is a great work, and requires much strength and sometime; and therefore to put it into so narrow a Compass as the remainder of our lives when we lye a dying, is most unreasonable. Repentance is not so *easie* and *short* a work as to be put off to that moment, when we have not only the *least time*, but the *least strength* also. And yet of all men's in the World, their Repentance will require the great-

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est labour and time, who having always lived in sin, have the sins and evil habits of an whole life to unravel and undo. And thus much of my first Argument.

C H A P. II.

Now this will further appear to be a very great mistake, if we consider, that an holy life is not only necessary to a comfortable death, but also to an happy Eternity: And if an holy life must go before an happy and glorious Resurrection, what shall we think of them that lead a wicked life, and yet think hereafter to live with God in glory. Now that an holy life, and an universal inherent holiness of our Nature, is indispensibly necessary to our eternal happiness hereafter, will abundantly appear from these following Severals.

1. The holy Scriptures do very frequently and plainly teach us this Lesson

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son. This is the constant language of them , which they speak all along. And the man that doubts of the truth of this , or else is ignorant of it , it is either because he does not read the Scriptures , or will not believe them : For though the holy Scriptures be in many things hard to be understood , and there be difficulties in them too great for the wisest Clerk , and many other things of less moment in which learned and religious men cannot yet agree: Yet notwithstanding all this , when they tell us the necessity of an holy life , they do it so plainly , that he that runs may read it , and there is not the least place left for dispute and controversie in this matter. This is that in which all Dissenters in other things do accord and agree: And that which may , without any learning or great Scholarship , be very easily understood. For in this matter they give out a certain and distinct sound that every man may prepare himself to battel. They tell us that, *without bari-*
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*liness no man shall see God, Heb. 12.
14. That , if we live after the flesh we
shall die , Rom. 8. 13. And that we
must be holly in all manner of conversati-
on, 1 Pet. 1. 15. They tell us plainly,
that except a man be born again , he
cannot see the Kingdom of God , John
3. 3. Besides , they teach us that this
World we now live in , is a *Field*, and
intimate to us that our present time is
a *Seed-time* , and they tell us moreo-
ver , that whatsoever a man sows , that
he shall also reap , that if we sow to the
flesh , we shall of the flesh reap corrupti-
on , Gal.6. 7. That is , our harvest
shall be according to our seed:So that if
our works be evil , our doom must need
be sad.Betides this , they tell us distin^ctly and severally , what those evil seeds
are that we must beware of , what those
evil works are that will bring us to an
eternal destruction;viz. *Adultery,For-
nication , Uncleaness , Lasciviousness ,
Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance,
Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions,
Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunk-
enness**

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enness, Revellings, and such like. Gal. 5. 19. Nay, the Word of God gives us in several Catalogues and Rolls of those sins that will keep us out of the Kingdom of Heaven, that we might be sure to avoid them, as appears in the places following. which will deserve our very serious perusal, 1 Cor. 6. 9,10. Col. 3. 5. Eph.5. 5. And not only so, but it also calls upon us loudly to beware, lest by any means we be deceived, it being as much as our souls are worth: It bids beware, *Be not deceived*, 1 Cor. 6. 9. And again, *Let no man deceive you with vain words*, for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience, Eph. 5. 6. And again the same Apostle cries out aloud, *For these things sake, the wrath of God comes upon the Children of disobedience*, Col. 3. 6. And again, the same Apostle having reckoned up the works of the flesh, earnestly crys out, *of the which (says he) I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they* which

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which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, Gal. 5.21. And again, Be not deceived God is not mocked, Gal. 6.7. In which expressions so often repeated , and so earnestly recommended , and so plainly delivered , the Apostle shews an extraordinary ~~πάθος~~ , and a very great care of the souls of men at once. What ever we are mistaken in , he would not have us so greatly mistaken , as to think there is no absolute necessity of an holy life in order to our happiness hereafter : For there cannot be a more great and dangerous error , than to think we may live as we list , and yet be happy with God hereafter. Now the holy Scripture , that it might beat all men off from this mistake does moreover inform us , that *God is no respecter of persons , Actis 10.34.* And that, be our Priviledges and prerogatives what they will , yet shall none of them supersede the necessity of an holy life. *For in Christ Jesus , neither Circumcision availeth any thing , nor uncircumcision , but*

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but faith, which worketh by love, Gal. 5. 9. Rom. 2. 11, 25. That we are baptized into the Christian faith, and continue within the pale of the visible Church, that we descend from never so religious Parents, and partake of all the Ministeries of the Church, that we profess our selves of the strictest Sect, and that we have a very great discerning in the Laws of God. All this, and more than all this, will do us no good at last (but rather enhance our condemnation) if we lead wicked lives. Though we have a *Levite* for our Priest, and never so *Orthodox* a *faith*, yet if in the mean time we have an *Idol* for our *God*, and our *manners* be *profane*, we are still in the way that leads down to the Chambers of death. Nay, though we say unto Christ, *Lord, Lord*, and though we could truly say unto him at that day, that *we had prophesied in his Name, and done many wonderfull works.* Mat. 7. 22. yet he will not regard us, whoever we be, and what ever we have done for him, if

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if we have been *workers of iniquity*. Nay, he would not regard us though we were of his Kindred, of the same lineage and blood , *Mat. 49, 50.* though we were his Brothers or Sisters or Mother after the flesh. If his own Mother had not believed on him as well as born him, she had been a miserable Woman. For she was more happy in being his *Disciple*, than in being his *Mother*. Nay , and our Saviour himself seems to intimate no less, when after a certain Woman had cried out , *Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou hast sucked*: He said, *Ye rather, Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it* , *Luke 11. 27,28.* No less than this did God require in the old Law , and in comparison with this , those Sacrifices and rites of his own appointment were not acceptable to him: For even then a contrite heart was unto God the sweetest Sacrifice , a slaying of their sins was more pleasing to him than the blood of thousands of Bullocks:

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locks : Sincere Prayer was then the choicest incense, and the paring away their proud and callous flesh was that Circumcision that God delighted in, *Psal. 50.8. 51.16,17. Jer. 6.20. 7.22, 23. Esa. 1. 11,12. Micah 6.6,7,8. Amos 5. 22.* Although God required sacrifices and other ceremonies, yet if they offered up the beast; and spared their sin, that $\tau\delta\kappa\omega\ \mathfrak{E}n\beta\sigma\tau$, the Beast within them, they were not welcom to Gods Altars. If they cut off the sore-skin of their flesh, and let their hearts in the mean time be overgrown with their pride and unbelief, if they offered incense up towards Heaven, and kept their hearts below upon the lusts of the flesh, God was not pleased with such a service, though of his own appointment. Thus he tells the Jews *He that killeth an Ox* (* and in the mean time spares his sin) *is as if he slew a man : He that sacrificeth a Lamb, is as if he cut off a dogs neck: He that offereth*

* So the LXXII render it. 'Ο γ
ἀνθρώπος οὐκέτι
μολύβος.

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offereth an Oblation is as if he had offered Swines blood: He that burneth Incense as if he blessed an Idol, Esa. 66. 3. Such sacrifices of fools were but ~~ευρητοις τροφη~~, They fed the fire upon the Altar , but they made no atonement. God abhorred such services as these, for with him *to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of Lambs,* 1 Sam. 15.22. Now if under the Law God required an holy life, then under the Gospel nothing can excuse us from it. And thus much the Apostle teaches us in these words : *Sin shall not have dominion over you , for ye are not under the Law but under grace,* Rom.6. 14. After all this , one would think, that he that considers these things, and he that believes them , should no longer doubt of the necessity of an holy life , and therefore should not dare to go on in his sin , and think on his death-bed, to make an amends for the miscarriage of a wicked life , with a few good words of course. Certainly, in other things there is nothing truer, than

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than that the faults and defectiveness of any of the premises, are constantly found also in the Conclusion: And if it be true in this case (as the Word of God assures us it is) nothing can be more absurd, than to expect so good a Conclusion, as a glorious Resurrection, from the *faulty premises* of a wicked life. And we shall judge very strangely, if we think a few good words of a dying sinner, will avail as much with God as an holy life: We cannot say he lived a good life, that never called upon God till he lay a dying. The *parts* of our life must be holy, before the *whole* can be called so: We do not call a Picture or Statue fair, that hath not all its parts and proportions. I shall end

τῷ βίῳ καθά-
περ ἀγαλμα-
τῷ πάντα τὰ
μέρη καλὰ εί-
νας δέ.

this particular with the words of a very worthy Divine against the Papists: His words are these, If Mr. Chillingworth follow the Scripture, worth.
I must not promise myself Salvation,
without

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without effectual dereliction and mortification of all Vices , and the effectual Practice of all Christian Vertues. But your Church opens an easier and broader way to heaven ; and though I continue all my life long in a course of sin , and without the practice of any Virtue , yet gives me assurance that I may be let into Heaven at a postern gate, even by any Act of Attrition at the hour of death ; if it be joyned with Confession , or by an Act of Contrition without Confession . Thus he to my present purpose.

2. But if we add to this , the infinite and essential holiness of Gods Nature , we cannot imagine that he should receive the unclean and filthy sinner into his Embraces :

— *Quid enim sperare nocentibus agris
Concessum ? vel quae non dignior hostia
vita ?*

Who can believe that God, who hates sin with a perfect hatred , and cannot endure it in his sight : That is light and,

and in whom is no darkness at all, that cast the Angels out of Heaven for their pride, and our first Parents out of Paradise for their Rebellion, that drown'd the old World for their ungodliness, and burnt up *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* for their wicked lives, and hath ever destroyed the Nations for their sins, should yet entertain the sinner into his love, receive him into his arms, shine upon him with his favour, and rejoice over him to do him good: Or that He, before whom all things are naked and open, should be so easily deceived, as to be charmed with a parcel of good words from a dying man; who in the meantime is an enemy to him in his heart. We know such a mans Sacrifice is an abomination to the Lord. Prov. 15.8. And we know God heareth not sinners, John 9. 31. Nay, the very Heathen could say, That an unclean person might not have communion with a pure Being. We

Μὴ καταρχῶ
καθάρος ἐπάν-
τελει μή εσ-
μιτόν Hierocles in
carm Pythag.

may

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may as well expect that all the Elements should change their natures, that the Fire should become cold and tame, and the Waters dry and hard; that an excels of light, and a thick darkness should amicably agree and sit down together at the same time and place, that contradictions should be at no distance, or that God should cease to be what he is: As that God who is holy, and cannot be otherwise, who hates sin perfectly, and cannot choose but hate it wheresoever it is, should be at perfect friendship and favour with that man, that loves his sin heartily, and embraces it with great delight. We deceive our selves infinitely if we think he will or can, for it is contrary to his Nature. Indeed

Vide Cic. de
natura Deor. l.2.
Plut in fin. Pe-
riclis. Prudent.
cont. Symmach.
l.1.

if the God whom we worship were no better than the Heathen God were reported to be, of whose quarrels, adulteries, murders and fends, we read in the Writings of their

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their own Worshippers, then might any man soon become a fit Companion of such a Deity, Adulterers, Drunkards, Thieves and Robbers would be very fit mates for such false gods as *Jupiter*, *Bacchus*, *Mercury*, and such like, which were some of those whom the Heathens Worshipped, For to imitate him whom we worship, hath always been thought safe ad-

*Jamblich de via
in Pythag c. 28.*

vice: And he was one of the wisest Heathens that said, *That those men did ridiculously: that sought for that which is truly righteous from any other but the gods, or those that were like them.* And he adds very well, *Δῆλος ὅπταῦτα πρᾶξισ τοῖς τυγχάνει οἱ Θεοὶ χαλεψ*, *that we must do those things with which God is delighted.* Nor could there be a surer rule than this, had they not been mistaken in the object of their Worship: And it is

*Semina pene
omnium sceler-
rum a Diis suis
peccantium tur-
ba collegit. Jul.
Firmich. de
errore Profan.
Relig. Vide
Lactant. Inst. I.
l.c. 10.*

D

likely

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likely the Heathen were the more wicked upon this score ; and if they were, they were not reproveable from their own principles. For why should *Cicero* inveigh against *Verres* for committing Adultery , when *Jove* himself whom they worshipped, had done the same , or against *P. Clodius* for Incest, when their great Deity was known to have been incestuous. St. *Austin* Aug. conf. l.i. c.16. takes notice of the lewd young man in the *Comedian*, that justified himself in his uncleanness by the example of *Jupiter*, and did as it were animate and provoke himself to lust , *quasi cœlesti Magisterio*, by the warranty of *Jove*. No better could be expected from those that worshipped such Deities, and *Lactant. Inst. I.* believed such things of 5.c.10 them : Who could expect any thing but cruelty from the Worshippers of *Mars* and *Bellona*; or any reverence to Parents from the worshippers of *Jupiter*? Who would look for chastity from the Adorers of an

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an Adulterers, or for Justice from them that served a Thievish *Mercury*: They were not like to be chast or sober that offered sacrifice to *Bacchus*, and those other false gods. whose adulteries and excesses were not only reported in the Writings of their followers, but represented upon open Theaters, that all men might know them. But our God, whom we worship, is an Holy God, and we must be so also if we would worship him aright, or be acceptable to him. And this is an argument that God himself uses with us, and very forcible it is, to be holy because he is so. *It is written* (says the Apostle) *be ye holy, for I am holy,* 1 Pet. 1. 16. And indeed we often find this written in the Law of *Moses*, where the Jews are required to be holy because God is so, *Levit* 11.44.19.2.20.7. *Deut* 10. 17. And therefore we may not expect any favour from God, unless we become like him.

3. The necessity of an holy life here in order to our future happiness will

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farther appear , if we consider the nature of that happiness , or Heaven which God hath reserved for us : There is no one thing in which men more mistake , I fear , than in their conceits about Heaven : Men speak of it much , and every man seems to desire it as a good place , or state in general , when in the mean time they know not what it is , nor wherein it does consist . We are very desirous of Heaven , but not careful to fit and prepare our selves for it . The Mother of Zebedees Children would have her two Sons sit by Christ in his Kingdom , but yet does not beg for them the grace that should enable them to drink the Cup , and receive the Baptism that should prepare them for it *Vide Pembles Mat. 20.* Men conceive of it after a carnal and fleshly manner . Thus did he that thought it a *Green Meadow* . Thus that great impostor Mahomet promises his true believers a Paradise watered with delightful Fountains ,

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Fountains , adorned with stately Trees, and enriched with variety of fruits. Where men shall be magnificently cloathed , and stretch themselves upon costly beds, and be attended with delicate musick , and have Wives transcendently beautiful. Such a Paradise did that Beast promise his disciples : Which is a clear Argument that the man was immersed in sensual delights, and unworthy of the reasonable soul. Much such a state do the poor carnal Jews dream , that their *Messias* shall bring them to, when he comes , when they shall be feasted with great Provision , and drink of the Wine of Paradise , that hath been reserved for them from the days of *Adam*: At this Feast they name the very dishes that shall be provided, and what sports shall go before , &c. Such conceits are men ready to have of

Vide. *Amyrald* of Religions part.3. ch.3.

Vide Mr. *Grenaves* his Description of the *Seraglio*. ch. 12.

Vid. *Cbald.P-*
rapk.in Cast.8.2.

Vide *Buxt.Syn-*
ag.Judic.c.36.

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Heaven : And indeed if Heaven were such a place as this kind of men speak of , it would much please a profane man , and the most wicked would at all times be very fit for Heaven. The Drunkard and the Glutton, the proud and the ambitious , the worldling and effeminate would be well pleased with such a *Fools Paradise* as this , and there would be no man , though never so much depraved , but would be very fit for such a sensual happiness. But we are taught to think otherwise of Heaven, that there is *no marrying, or giving in marriage there* ; *Luke 20.35.* And that *no unclean thing shall enter into it* , *Rev. 20.27.* And therefore as we would be happy , so we must be holy : For holiness is not only necessary by *a necessity of Precept* , but by *a necessity of means*. For as wickedness does lay a Foundation for our misery, Vide *Smiths Select Discourses. p.446.* and a train for our destruction , every sinner being within the attractive power of Hell : *Sin and Hell being of*

of the same lineage, and always twisted together: So also is *holiness* of absolute and indispensable necessity to our future *happiness*: They being rather two several notions of one thing, than things in themselves distinct. And therefore no man may promise himself Heaven hereafter, that does not live an holy life here. We are here in a state of trial and probation, and, as it were, at School, in a lower form, where if we improve our time well, and do our tasks, that is, if we mortifie and subdue our evil affections, then we shall be removed to an higher form, and added to the spirits of just men made perfect. But if we trifle away our time, or spend it amiss, we shall be thrown down among Hypocrites and unbelievers. Nor can it be otherwise than thus. For what should a wicked man do in Heaven, Certainly, such a state would be a torment to him if the thing were possible. In stead of being his *happiness*, it would be his prison. He would be weary of that

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state, which now he seems so much to desire. What pleasure would he find in singing perpetual praises to God, that is now weary of giving him thanks! What content would the covetous Worldling find in Heaven! There he will find no Leases or Farms for purchase, no Widows or Fatherless to oppress, no poor mens faces to grind, nor bargains to drive, nor mony to put out, nor forfeitures to receive. The voluptuous man would find little pleasure there where is *no marrying or giving in marriage*, no beds of Ivory, nor meat or drink, nor Tavern or Alehouse, or jolly companion to carowse and quafse withall. The proud man would take little delight in a constant ascribing all honour and praise to God: Such men as these are not fit for *Glory*, who are so far from *Grace*. They must lie down with the Devil and his Angels, they are not fit for God, and that inheritance among them that are sanctified.

I might add to what I have said,
this

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this also: That it is nothing but *Sin*, and the want of an *holy nature*, that makes the *Devil* so *ugly*, and so deplorably *miserable* as he is, nothing but this obstructs his happiness. We all look upon the *Devil* as a most odious, and filthy, and miserable creature: He hath generally with us a very ill name, and that very justly also: But we do not consider what hath made the devil so ugly and so wretched: Now that is nothing but his sin against God. For God did not make him so; when he came out of Gods Hands he was an holy Angel, bright and spotless: But since that his sin hath discoloured him, and left those filthy spots upon his nature, which if they could again be separated from him, he would clear up into an Angel of light, and be better than the best of us. But his Sin hath *stained* him, and *stigmatized* him now, and hath made him at once the most *deformed* and most *miserable* creature. And that man, whoever he be, that lives

D. 5. imm

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in sin and loves it, that does the works of the *Devil*, i. e. that is a liar, a false Accuser of Gods children, an Enemy to the souls of men, that is, malicious, envious and proud, such a man is ugly and miserable as the devil is. For, to say no more but the very truth, such a man is a *Devil Incarnate*: He differs only in *name* from him, while he hath the very same *nature*: And while he lives in these sins, the Devil himself may belong to the Kingdom of Heaven as much as he: For who can believe that a *man* should be *happy* with those very sins about him, which at the same time make the Devil unavoidably *miserable*: Or that we should ever enter into *Heaven* with those very sins, which cast the Devil *out thence*. Did God not spare the *Angels* that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, (2 Pet. 2. 4.) and shall he spare *man*, and make him happy also, though he have the very same sins deeply rooted in his nature! It cannot be: It is true indeed, such a man

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man as this may lay aside his sins , and obtain mercy at the hands of God through Jesus Christ , but if he do not this , the sins that make the *Devil* so vile in the eyes of God . and so miserable, will make *him* so likewise. And therefore when a wicked man pretends to defie the Devil , and professes to hate him , he ought to consider that these are but very vain words, when at the same time he embraces his works. For we are obliged by our profession of Christianity , as well as by our first Promise , *to renounce the devil and all his works.* And if we defie his *name* only , and do not renounce his *works*, we do but like the Cowardly *Souldier* that *exclaims* against his enemie whom he will not *fight*. It was an excellent saying of Siracides , *When the ungodly curseith Satan , he curseth his own soul,* Eccl. 21. 27. When a wicked man curseth the devil , and is at the same time one of his children and followers, he does but curse himself.

If then we will believe the *Holy Scriptures:*

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Scriptures rather than the definitions of a corrupt Church, and think that God is necessarily holy, and not such an one as the Heathens worshipped; and that Heaven is an holy State, and not a Paradise for fools and sensualists; we must also grant, that holiness here is of absolute necessity to our happiness hereafter. And then certainly, this shews us again the vanity of those men that lead wicked lives, and live without God in the World, and think to make amends for all with a few good words at last (which they call Repentance) and by that means to get into a better world than this.

C H A P. III.

I shall now shew the very great danger of delaying our repentance to the latter end of our days: What very great

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great hazards , and uncertainties , and peradventures we run when we do so.

I. It is uncertain how long we shall live , and therefore there is danger in putting off our Repentance to our old age. God never gave us our life in *Lease for Years*; we are but *Tenants* at the will of the *Lord*, and he may throw us out of our *Cottages* when he pleases. We have no day granted to us to pay back the lives that God hath lent us , they may at any time be required of us. It was the Devils first lie , and he is always repeating it , *Ye shall not surely die* , Gen. 3. 4. And if he can by this means rock us asleep he hath us fast enough. But yet we have daily experience how vain a thing a man at his best estate is, and how extreamly vain it is to promise our selves any long continuance, or design any great matters here. The Jews have a good pro-

*Natura dedit u-
suram vitæ.
tanquam pecu-
niæ, nullâ præfi-
tuâ dñe. Cic.
Tusc. qu. l. i.*

verb

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verb that *Many old Camels carry the skins of the younger Camels to the Market* And indeed
Vide Buxt. Floril. Hebr. one would think that the sudden death of our

Neighbours, of our Friends and Relatives, that were younger, and stronger, and better than we, should convince us that we have no assurance that we shall live long. How many have we known or heard of, upon whom death came and gave no warning: For so, many times, it is, men die suddenly when they least think of such a thing. Many a man dies in the midst of a journey; in a crowd and throng of worldly business, when they are just arrived to their preferment and the

*Tu occupatus es,
vita f. stinat:
Mors interim
aderit cui, velis
nolis, vacandum
est.* Sen. de
brev. vit. c. 8.

summe of their hopes, upon their marriage or their new honours, in their meals or sports, in a drunken fit or quarrel, and when they thought least of such a thing; then hath death overtaken them

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them, and laid on them its cold hands, closed their eyes , and stopped their breath , and spoiled their delights, and put an end to their mirth , and caused all their thoughts to perish. And then the man that had no time to serve God must find time to die , and he that had not leisure to amend his life , must now lose it against his will. We often hear such tidings as this , that such a man is suddenly dead , whom we saw alittle before in perfect health, and heard contriving some great things he would do ere long. And indeed there is no reason we should wonder at any of these things: For,besides that such things are very common , it is more to be marvelled at that we should live so long than that we should die so suddenly. For how very easily is this earthen vessel broken , in what great danger are we every day ! Too great an *heat* , or too much *cold*; too much *sleep* , or too great *watching*; if we either *eat* too much, or *abstain* too long; or else *labour* too hard, we are soon

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soon destroyed: And if we presume upon our own temperance, yet who can secure himself from enemies abroad! A wild beast may meet him, and tear him in pieces, *2 King. 2.24.* Or an enemy may give him a thrust under the fifth rib, (*2 Sam. 3.27.*) and let out his soul that way, or a fool or a Mad-man may strike him to the wall when an evil spirit is upon him: Thou mayst enter into an house that may fall upon thee and kill thee, (*Luke 13. 4.*) Or thy horse may throw thee out of this into another world; thou mayst catch the Plague, or be surprised in thy games, or choaked in thy meals. The rage of a Tyrant, the infection of a disease, the poison of a morsel or of a draught, a Clap of Thunder, or a Flash of Lightning may quickly send thee to thy long home: *The Lord may smite thee, or thy day may come to die, or thou mayst descend into battle and perish,* *1 Sam. 26. 10.* Thy life is in Gods hand, who may take it away when he pleaseth,

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seth, or whensoever thou displeasest him. And then if thou die in thy *sin*, thou must lie down in *sorrow*, and R. Eleazar. In dwell with *everlasting Picke Avoth*. *burnings*. And therefore it was wholesome advice the Jew gave his Scholar, that he *should repent one day before he died*: His meaning was, that he should *repent presently*, because he could not tell whether he should live while to morrow; and that he should be *always exercising repentance*, that so when ever death should come, it might find him prepared for it: And to that purpose he Vide R. Salomon Jarchi in makes use of the words of Solomon: *Let thy Eccl. 9. 8.* *Garments be always white, and let thy head lack no Ointment*, Eccl. 9. 8. The Jews were commanded to afflict their souls at the day of Expiation, Levit. 16. 29. And Maimonides. one of their Writers H. Tisbav. tells us, that they were then obliged to confess their sins, and to begin their confession the night before

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fore this day of Expiation , and that before Supper also , and he gives this reason , because else perhaps he may be choaked in Supper-time before he hath made his Confessions . Alas , what do we mean to talk of repenting in our old age , when perhaps our breath may be stopt by the next morsel we eat , or our souls required of us this night : And it is the greatest folly in the world , to live in that state of things in which we shall be afraid to die . It was great folly in the Virgins , to have their Oyl to seek when the Bridegroom called . If we do not repent speedily , it is very probable we shall not repent at all , and if we do not repent at all , we shall be unavoidably and eternally miserable . One delay may for ever hinder us : It is here as it was with the Pool of Bethesda , where we find he that first stepped in after the moving of the waters , was cured of his disease , John 5.4. He that repents presently may have pardon , but he that slips but one season , may perhaps never have it a-

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ny more; for his life may soon be taken away, and then his hopes are ended. I have read a sad story of a Gentleman, who on his Death-bed imagin'd he saw certain Messengers that came to carry him away to Hell, whereupon he fell into great shrieks, and ended his miserable

life with these words, *Drexel. Trib. Christ. c. 2. S.4.*
Give me respite till to

morrow. And *Drexelius* tells us a story of another, of which he was witness himself: Of a certain rich man that fell sick, and in his sickness was desired by some that stood by to lift up his mind towards Heaven: He fetched a great sigh, and told them, that he did look up towards Heaven, but that he perceived that the passage thither was now shut upon him. But what need I speak of these, how many have our own ears heard complain upon their uneasie death-beds, of the precious time they have lost, and the time they want, and cry out in vain, that their daies may be prolonged,

*O
that*

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that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end. Deut. 32. 39. O that we would be wise in time, for there is no wisdom in the Grave, whither we are making haste. We had need pray it may be rendered rightly. See Numb. 27. 7. Jer. 8. 6. And the Chaldee Paraph. on Ps. 127. 2. Ex. 10. 29. with the Psalmist, Teach us to number our days aright, and we will bring a wise heart, Ps. 90. 12. as those words may be well translated: That is, Grant that we may not be mistaken in the right numbering of our daies, in thinking them longer than indeed they are, and then this right numbring of our days shall teach us Lessons of great wisdom. He is recorded for a Fool that promised himself many years. And certainly, he can deserve no better name that does so: We find many times, that the men that die suddenly, are those men that thought to have lived longest. Let us not say we will repent hereafter, when we cannot tell but we may die presently.

2° But

2 But suppose thou dost live to old age, yet it is very *uncertain*, and *a very great peradventure*, whether thou shalt have the grace truly to repent or not. Nay; perhaps thou wilt die suddenly still, and never have the opportunity or the heart to call upon God for mercy. Thou mayst perhaps be given over to an hard heart, and a feared Conscience, and tempted to curse God and die. *The Lord*, it may be, *may be departed from thee*; and become thine enemy. As it was with *Saul*, *1 Sam. 28. 15.* It is most likely thou wilt die as thou didst live. What should make me think, that the grace of God will follow thee to thy death-bed, and effectually bring thee home, after thou hast abused the love, and despised the grace of God all thy life time! Why shouldst thou think that God is so fond of thee, as that he will save thee whether thou wilt or not! Certainly we have more reason to fear, that God will no longer regard us, nor follow us with entreaties,

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entreaties, nor yet hear us though we cry loudly to him in our calamity: Let us well consider what the Holy Scriptures teach us in this matter, *Prov. 1. 28. 29.* —— *Jer. 11. 14. Ezek. 8.18.* Indeed, if in our youth and strength we remember our Creator, as we are commanded, we shall be accepted. For God hath not only commanded us to repent, and return to him, but to do it speedily, which if we do we may be assured of acceptance, for we have a Promise for it, *Eccl. 12. 1. Isa. 55. 6, 7. Prov. 8. 17.* But if we do neglect him Now, we have no assurance that God will regard us in our extremity. If we be profane, as *Esa*u was, who sold his birth-right for a trifle, we have reason to fear that we shall lose our Fathers blessing also, and meet with the same event with him. *For ye know that afterward when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of Repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, Heb. 12. 17.*

So

So that though we should live to an old age , yet may we die in our impenitence and hardness of heart , in the love of our sins, and of this world: And thus we shall do if God leave us without his special grace , which we give him just cause to do. It is to be feared we shall die as we lived; the tree uses to fall that way that it is wont to lean towards. If we live without God in the world , it is much to be feared we shall die without any regard to him , and perhaps without so much as calling upon his Name , or crying to him for his Mercy.

3. But suppose we do call upon God for mercy upon our Death-beds, and cry out upon our sins , yet we have great reason to fear lest we should play the Hypocrite at such a time as this. It is well if our Death-bed Repentance be any better than dissembling: We have great reason to suspect it is a forced, fained, and slavish thing. It is no wonder we cry out for Mercy, when we find Gods Justice too hot for us.

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us. We easily give our enemy fair words, when his dagger is at our breast, or his knife at our throat : When we are within the *view* of the *flames* of Hell, within the *stench* of the *Brimstone*, and the noise of the *miserable* ! When we see ourselves just passing into an *eternal destruction*, no wonder that then we cry out for mercy. This may indeed affright us out of the *action* of *sin*, when yet we retain our *affection* to it. And though the sick man may cry out loudly for mercy at this time, and that with a bitter weeping, yet there are two considerations that will render this Repentance very suspicious, (1) If we consider how this Repentance commences, and is first wrought in us : It is to be feared, that it is only an effect of Gods *Power*, and *Vindictive Justice* affrighting us, and not of his *goodness* that wins and draws us to him. We may cry out because we cannot *withstand* his *Power*, when yet we do not grieve because we have *abused* his *love*. And such mens devotion

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votion is like that of the ancient Heathens to one of their Deities whom they worshipped *ne noceret*, lest their Deity should hurt them. Now most certain it is, that although the Power of God may scare us into some kind of repentance, yet it is the *τὸ χειρόν Θεοῦ*, *the goodness of God, that leads us to it*, as the Apostle assures us, *Rom. 2. 4.* The holiness and infinite goodness of Gods Nature, that he is infinitely better than all the World is, or can be, to us is the great inducement that brings a sinner home to God. Thus it was with the Prodigal son : *When he came to himself he said, how many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger?* *I will arise, and go to my father, &c.* *Luke 15. 17, 18.* And thus it was with the people of *Israel* in the Prophet, who after they see the vanity of running from God, are brought home by this inducement, *Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first Husband, for then it was better with me than now,*

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Hos. 2. 7. For the Almighty Power of God is not of it self an inducement to a poor sinner to come to Him , for that rather speaks *terroure* than *Encouragement*. His power may sooner make us be *afraid* of him , than *fear* him as we ought , or *love* him as we should. For *he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him* , Heb. 11. 6. There is *Mercy* with him , that he may be *feared*, *We must fear the Lord and his Goodness* , Hos. 3. 5. Gods power may make us dissemble and feign our selves obedient at such a time as this. And that is the meaning sure of these words in the

וְיִכְחַשׁוּ
אֶת־עָמָלָךְ LXXII
יְכַרְבּוּ Targ.
They shall be
found liars. See
the old Trans-
lation. V. Ps.
18.44.
2 Sam. 22.45.

Psalmist , Through the greatness of thy Power shall thine enemies submit themselves to thee, Ps. 66. 3. They shall submit themselves, that is , they shall yield a feigned obedience , they shall dissemble or lie to thee , as the Hebrew

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Hebrew word imports. What we do at such a time , it is to be feared we are forced to , we cry out upon our sins because they have made us miserable, we would now part with them, because we know not how to keep them any longer with safety. We hate our sins because they are hurtful to us, and the Rod of God is upon us. But if we might have our sins quietly, might we enjoy them in peace we should not then hate them. Our Repentance is in great part against our will , and therefore cannot be true repentance : We do at such a time by our sins , as a Mariner in a tempest at Sea , does by his goods, who throws them into the Sea indeed , but it is because his life is in danger in a sinking ship , and not because he is weary of his goods. And as this can hardly de- serve the name of a free or voluntary action , and a matter of choice , so may we very justly suspect

*Nemo invitus
bene facit, eti-
am si bonum sit
quod facit.* Aug.

E 2 tha;

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that repentance that begins upon no other accounts. For true Repentance is a free and voluntary Action. We must not think to impose upon God after this manner. He knows the voice of *Jacob* from that of *Esau* well enough.

—*Verum nec nocte paratum
Plorabit, qui me velit inservare que-
reliſ.*

The great and holy and all-wise God, will accept of nothing less than a true and unfeigned, and hearty Repentance: A forsaking our sins, and a free parting with them. But then again another consideration, that will make this death-bed Repentance very suspicious to be a piece of dissembling, is this; (2.) if we diligently observe the event of this matter, we shall many times find that those men that upon their sick-beds cried out so bitterly upon their sins, and so loudly for mercy, when God hath restored them to their

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their health again , have embraced the very same sins which they lamented before , and have been as wicked , and far more wicked than ever they were before. Which as it is a clear evidence that this *Repentance* was no better than plain *Hypocrisie* , so it may also teach us what little reason we have to trust to such a Repentance as this, or to measure our selves by so uncertain and very fallacious a Rule. There are many men that in a sharp fit of sickness, or some great adversity , make a very glorious appearance : You shall hear them complain of their forgetfulness of God , and tell you how they would live and serve God if he would spare them this once: But if you look upon these men after God hath restored them, you may find them many times far worse than ever they were known to be. Such men as these are like the topps that children play with, that will go no longer than while they are whipt : Thus the *Israelites*, when they were *beaten* , then they sought

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the Lord. But when Jesurun waxed fat, then he kicked. When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and enquired early after their God, and they remembred that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Now a man would think this a very good people : But let us mark what follows, Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant, Ps. 78. 34. — For when God delivered them they soon forgot his works, Ps. 106. 13. So far were they from being made better by their afflictions, which was Gods aim in laying them on, that they wearied God through their obstinacy, so that he complains of them by the Prophet. Why should you be smitten any more, ye will revolt more and more, Isa. 1.5.

In a word, it was always so with that people, that however they sought the Lord in their Calamity, yet in their

their Prosperity they ran from him as fast: And the Lord tells them as much by the Prophet: *I spake unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear, this hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice,* Jer. 22. 21.

And therefore it was a wise saying of Ben Sira, *That we Vide. Bust.
should honour a Physici- Lexic. Rab
an before we have need binic in. Non
of him.* That is, that we should honour God in our prosperity, if we would have him propitious to us in our adversity. To which we may add what we read in Siracides: *Use Physick or ever thou be sick: Before judgment examine thy self, and in the day of Visitation thou shalt find mercy. Humble thy self before thou be sick; and in the time of sins shew repentance. Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy Vow in due time, and defer not until death to be justified.* Eccles. 18. 19, 20, 21, 22. To turn to God in our youth and prosperity is a great Argument of a sincerity

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of our Repentance. Whereas we have great Reason to fear that our death-bed Repentance is but a flattering of God , and that unto which we are craned and *skrewed* up by the terrors of the Almighty , and not *drawn* to it by the *cords* of a *Man* , or the *Bands* of *Love* , *Hos.* 11.4. Whereas he that does truly repent and is converted , chooses to become a new man, and leads a new life , and would do so , if there were no *Hell* to punish , and *Heaven* to reward him. For he inwardly loves holiness , and hates sin with a perfect hatred. He is always acted by an inward vital principle that moves him and sets him forward. Whereas the hypocrite is moved just like a *Clock* , or some such instrument , that goes indeed , but it is no longer than there are certain weights hanging on , that they will move : For they have no *vital principle* to actuate their wheels , and continue their motion : So is the *Hypocrite* , a kind of instrument that goes by *pulleys* or *weights* , which

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which may be taken away and laid aside, and then the motion is staid. Now the hypocrite upon his sick-bed hath great *weights* upon him, and no wonder that then he goes *faster*, but when they are removed, it is as little to be wondred at that he should stand still. This is excellently expressed by Job, speaking of the Hypocrite, *Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?* Job 27. 9, 10. In which words the hypocrite is painted in his colours: *He crieth unto God,* there's his Religion, ~~but~~ it is when trouble comes upon him, that is the *weight*, that moves him. For he wants an *inward principle*, for he does not *delight* in the *Almighty*: He wants a *vital principle* to continue his devotion, he will not *always* call upon God. The hypocrites Religion is a burden to him, it is not pleasant to his soul. He carries it about with him just as the King did the *Ark to Beth-shemesh*, who low-

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ed as they went along, 1 Sam. 6. 12. But the true servant of God delights to do his will, and keep his Commandments, and *His Commandments are not grievous*, 1 John 3.3. That is, they are not heavy and burdensom to him. His Religion is become natural to him, and he is in great measure the same man in health, that he is in sickness: And when in a great trouble he vows obedience to God, he performs his vows, *I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble*, Psal. 6. 13, 14. By what hath been said it will appear, that we have very great reason to suspect our death-bed repentance to be but hypocrisy, and so unavailable to our salvation: And this is another very great *peradventure* and hazard that he runs, that puts off his Repentance.

4. Another great danger in putting off our Repentance is this, that this is a step to final impenitence and unbelief,

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lief, which is a sin that there is no pardon in the Gospel for, a sin for which Christ never died, it being contrary to the whole design and purpose of the Gospel. O consider, will it not be a dreadful thing to die in thy sins, and lie down in everlasting burnings ! How great will thy misery be, if thou die in thy sins, when thou mightst have been saved from them: If thou art eternally lost when thou hadst a Saviour that was ready to deliver thee ! Would it not be a dismal sight to see a friend or brother dragged from his sick-bed to Hell. To hear him go howling down to the fire and brimstone ! This will be thy sad portion if thou die in thy sins. And certainly when thou puttest thy Repentance off but till to morrow, thou takest a step towards this sad Conclusion. For he that is now dead in his sins began with such single instances as now thou dost, when he was exhorted to repent he was wont to put God off with.

*Quid illis misericordia,
quibus ipsi
Salvator salutis
non erit?*

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with a *Not yet Lord*, and, when I have a fit season, when I have passed my youth, and followed the designes of young men. And then when God called, he had married a Wife, or hired a Farm, or is making a Purchase, trafficking and getting gain: and laying up in store for the Winter of old age. And thus the man put God off, till death stopped his breath, and spoiled his designes, and sent him away to his eternal misery: And then the poor creature is miserable, beyond all thought and all recovery. Thou sayst thou wilt repent to morrow. and so perhaps thou wilt always say, till all thy Sand be run out, and thy Sun be set, and there be no such thing as a *Morrow* left: When wilt thou make a stop if thou do not do it presently? Certainly, others have deluded themselves with these hopes, that are now among the *dead* and among the *damned*. They have said that they would repent ere long, but yet they left the world before they did this work, and are

are dead and miserable long ago. And how canst thou be secure , when thou treadest in the very same paththat hath led so many down to the Chambers of Death? Canst thou expect the ver-ry same track should bring thee to hap-piness , that brought thy Neighbour to his misery ?

5. Another danger in delaying our Repentance, is this, that so long as we remain without Repentance , God looks upon us as his enemies , and whatever we do is not acceptable in his sight: We are in a state of nature, and children of wrath , and all our prayers and confessions , &c. are not accepted. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, Prov.15.8.* We know God beareth not sinners , but if any man be a Worshipper of God , and doth his Will , him he beareth , John 9.31. Till we have repented , God looks upon us as his e- Vide Grot de-nemies, for War is jure Bell.i.l.c. rather a State than an 3. Action , and we are Gods enemies till

we

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we have laid aside our affection to our sin , and be reconciled to him. While we delay our Repentance, we stand

*Procrastinatio negandi instru-
mentum est.* out in our enmity to God ; for a *delay* is no less than a *denial*. He Card.

that puts God off does as much as declare that he refuses to be reconciled , and so does continue consumaciously an enemy to God. And God is also an enemy to him. And verily, did we know what it meant to be under Gods disfavour and displeasure, we would sooner choose the greatest miseries and torments in the world before it: If God withdraw our breath, we are lost for ever , and then we shall understand what Gods displeasure means , and shall find that there is *no sorrow like this sorrow*. And while we continue in this state, there is a very little distance between us and an eternal destruction. Methinks it should make an impenitent sinner startle , did he but consider how little a remove he is from eternal wrath , and that nothing

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thing keeps him from it but a small thread of life, which as it may be easily snapt asunder, so when it is, he falls down to unspeakable sorrows. Every man walks upon the borders, & within the Neighbourhood of death; we read of one that said, that the *τὸν πάχην τῆς γεώς*, Vide Diog. Laert. Anachars. i. e. The thickness of the Shipboard (which is not many inches) *is the distance that the Mariner is in from death.* And I am sure David said, *there was but a step between him and death,* 1 Sam. 20. 3. And indeed every man may say it truly. The next step may be into his grave: But then the impenitent sinner is in a worse case; for as every man is upon the borders of death, so is he upon the borders of death, and of Hell too.

6. By every delay we harden our hearts against God, and the oftner we do this, the more unlikely will be our Return and Repentance. *To day, if you will bear his voice, harden not your hearts,* Heb. 3. 7. By delaying to

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to hear Gods voice we become more incorrigible , and more reprobate, and averse from every good word and work ; till at length we get *a Whores forehead* , and refuse to be ashamed , and faces (and hearts too) harder than the rock that refuses to return , *Jer.3.3.5.3.* And then in vain are all the Sermons that we hear , and the judgments that we see and feel . We are not shaken by the terrors of the Law , nor drawn by the Promises of the Gospel , nor allured by the voice of the wisest Charmer . We go on in our sins , and though God hedg in our way with thorns , yet is nothing able to turn us back . Thus it is with the Jewish people , *With-hold thy foot from being unshod , and thy throat from thirst : but thou saidst , there is no hope : No , I have loved strangers and after them I will go , Jer. 2. 25.* A dreadful example we have of this in Pharaob : God sent to him to dismiss his people , he works signs and wonders to convince him , but he hardens his heart . The River is turned into

into blood ; he is plagued with Frogs, with Lice and Flies ; a Murrain falls upon his Cattle, and boyls upon himself and servants : Thunder , Hail , Fire and Locust , and a thick darkness will not make him yield, till at last he dies miserably by the Hand of the Almighty ; and he that would not obey Gods voice , must endure his band . He that delays to day to hear Gods voice , does by God as Pharaoh did , and the oftner he repeats these delays , and reiterates his resistances to the Call of God , the less hopes is there of his returning.

7. By our delays we provoke God to leave us , and to resolve to have no more to do with us , nor any longer to follow us with his mercies. God may perhaps the next repulse swear in his wrath that his spirit shall never strive with thee more , and that thou shalt never enter into his rest. God alone can tell how long he will endure our repulses, before he cast us off for ever. He can only tell how near ...

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are to come to that fatal point from whence there is no retreating. 'Tis observed that *Pharaoh*'s heart was hardened, after the *eighth resistance*; whether God will bear so long with us we cannot tell: We have too much reason to fear, that the next resistance we make, may bring this dreadful stroke upon us. 'Tis to be feared we are advancing apace to *Pharaoh*'s hardness of heart, unto which our acts of sin do set us forward by way of *natural causality*, as well as by calling down the Divine Justice to compleat the sad change. Do we not perceive our hearts grow more and more hard and inflexible: And that the tenderness which once we had wears away *Res delicata est* apace. Be not too bold: *Spiritus sanctus*. The Holy Spirit of God is tender and may easily be grieved, and caused to depart from thee, His gentle fires may be quenched by thy obstinacy. *Be instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee, Jer. 6. 8.* God deals with us, as with his Cities,

Deut.

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Deut. 20. He offers us terms of peace, but if we refuse to yield what can be expected, but ~~woulds answer~~; an irreconcileable warre for ever. And then we shall be as without God, so without *Hope* in the world. And much better would it have been, that we had never heard of the *me. cies* of the Gospel, which so unthankfully we have refused. If we put all these things together, we shall find that the putting our Repentance off to our death-beds is very full of *hazards* and *peradventures*.

C H A P. IV.

I Shall now proceed to shew the very great unreasonableness of putting our Repentance off to our death-beds: I shall make it appear to be a very unjust thing, and very unreasonable. And that I shall do in the following Severals.

1. It is very unreasonable to serve
God

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God in the last place. To spend the greatest and best part of our time and strength in the slavery of the Devil and World, and to put God off with our dry bones. When we have a *male* in our flock, to offer up unto God a *corrupt* thing. Certainly, our Land-lords and Masters will not be served thus. It is a most unjust thing to offer up unto God, nothing but the ruines and spoils of sin, and the leavings

*Non pudet te d^r reliquias vit
tibi r. servare,
& id solum tem-
pus b.^{næ} menti
destinare, quod
in nullam rem
conferri possit ?*
Sen. de. brev.
vit. c. 4.

of the Devil : To present him that, and that only, which we know not where else to beslow. We are not willing to serve God, till we can follow our sins no longer. We offer up unto God the *Wax*, and

keep the *Hony* to other uses. We do as *Saul* did, who, though he destroyed those things which were *vile* and *refuse*, sacrificing them to the Divine Will, yet he spared *Agag*, and the *best* of the *Sheep* and *Oxen*, 2 Sam. 15. And this

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this is the greatest piece of unreasonableness in the World. For if God be our Father and our Lord, our Master and our best Friend, to him is due the best of what we are or have. Our youth and strength, the spring of our Age, and the principal of our strength and time is only due to him.

2. It is very unreasonable to put off our great business to that instant, when we have least *time*, and least *strength* to do it in. Thus does he do that puts off his Repentance to his old Age and death-bed. This is as if two battels between the opposite Armies, should begin to be fought at night, when they would presently be buried in darkness, and distracted with confusion. Our death-bed is not a fit place for so difficult and comprehensive a work. Repentance should be finished, and not begun, at such a time. The Jews were forbid to seek *Manna* upon their Sabbath-day, they were to gather enough upon the day before, that they might rest on that day of rest.

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The everlasting rest is approaching on our death-bed , we should not then be to seek when we are entring into our Rest. This would be just as if a man should have all his daies work to do when his time of sleep and rest is come : They were foolish Virgins , that when their Bridegroom called had their Oyl to seek, and in this very miserable too, that while they went to provide themselves with Oyl , *the door was shut* , Mat. 25. Upon our death-bed our Lord calls us hence to receive the fruit of our ways , and therefore that is not a time to work. Besides , our death is sometimes very *sudden* , and then we have no *time*; And sometimes very *violent* , and then we have no *strength*. We are many times hurried away to our graves , and there is no space or distance between our health and death. When it is thus we have no time for any thing, and therefore none for our Repentance. But yet suppose we lye a while upon our death-bed , yet then many times we are

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are dead as to all the great purposes of life, and the ends of Religion: Many times our Reason is laid asleep by a Lethargy or Apoplexie, or else mastered by the flames of a Feavor, or insolencies of a Phrensie; at least much obscured by the steam of a black choler: And when our Reason is departed, it is too late to repent, and indeed impossible. But if nothing of this should happen, yet shall we find it task enough to conflict with our disease at that time: We shall have enough to do to support patiently under our present trouble. I have read of a Souldier under *Charles the Fifth*, Vide Serad. who begging from the Bell. Belg. l. i. Emperour his Master, Dec. 1. a discharge from the Office he held under him, and the Emperour demanding of him the reason that moved him to lay aside his Employment, he gave the Emperour this Answer, *That between the day of death, and the Affairs of life, there ought to intercede some space of time.* A wise speech it was

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was , and such an one as is thought to have had an influence upon that Emperour , to retire from his weighty Affairs , as History tells us he did . Sure I am , it carries with it a great truth , for there is very much to be done before we can die well , and it will be very unreasonable to put all that into so narrow a room as our death-bed is .

3. It is very unreasonable to put off our *main* busines , and busie our selves about *small* and *trifling* things . And thus he does that puts his Repentance off till his death-bed . We account him a very weak man that goes to a Mart or Fair , to lay in necessary provision for himself and family , and yet spends his *time* there in hearing sonnets , and his *mony* upon gauds and *play-things* . It is to be feared most men do thus : They live at that rate , as if God had sent them into the world to gaze , and to feed themselves fat , to take together a little wealth , to wear gay cloaths , or be cried up for brave

brave men. For these are the *little* things that we busie our selves about, and not to know God, and serve and love him, which yet is the great, and, indeed, only end for which God hath sent us into this world. It is a sad consideration to think how long we live, and to how little purpose: History tells us of *Julius Cæsar*, that when he read over *Alexanders* exploits, he wept, and told his friends, *That whereas Alexander at bis age had overcome Darius, that yet he had done nothing of any remark.* Vide Plutarch. Apophth.

Well may we all weep, when we think that we have been so long, and lived so *little*; that we have spent so *many years*, and done so *little work*: That at this Age we have not mastered our passions, not subdued our desires, not weaned our selves from this vexatious World, nor become either fit to live, or fit to die. That we should spend so much time about our profits and our pleasures, and be as far from God, and

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from Heaven, and farther too, than ever we were. *We are careful and troubled about many things, when we forget the Unum necessarium, the one needful thing, that good part that shall never be taken away from us,* Luke 10.41, 42.

4. It is very unreasonable to trust to our death-bed Repentance, and to say we will repent hereafter, because it will not be in our power to do it then, unless God follows us with his special grace, and enable us to do it. But whether he will do that or not we cannot tell; for besides that we give him just cause to abandon and forsake us: He hath no where promised that, though we neglect him in our health, he will certainly remember us on our Death-beds, and then work a true repentance in our hearts.

5. It will appear very unreasonable, if we consider how we do in our worldly affairs: If we should transact our worldly affairs with no greater wisdom than we do the concerns and affairs of our souls, we should be taken for Fools or Madmen

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madmen. In our worldly business we walk by certain saving rules, and prudential principles of good husbandry. We think it wisdom to secure the main, to provide against Winter, not to let our Market slip, nor to refuse a good proffer and overture, to choose good seed and a good season for the tillage and sowing our Land. We account him a fool that withstands his Market, and neglects his Seed-time, and yet expects a full purse and a plentiful Harvest. We think him a mad man that sows tares; and yet confidently looks for a Crop of Wheat. We call him an ill Husband that runs on score; and adds daily to his debts, but is neither careful to get them examined, nor get them crossed. We laugh at a man that begins not to learn a trade till he be old, that begins not his work till night, or that does not go to school till he is blind for old age: We should wonder to hear a very old man tell, that he is going to build himself

Turpis & ridicula res est ele-
mentarius Sc-

nex.Sen.cap.36.

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a fair house, and that then he would travel into forrein parts , and then go into the Wars , and learn the modes and fashions of the World. Should we see a man very dangerously wounded, his life bleeding out apace through his veins, that should tell us he would seek for no help till after so many days or months , how would such a thing astonish us ! We should admire at the man , that having drank deadly poison unawares , should speak of getting an Antidote the next Spring,in order to his recovery ! Who would not deride that man that should tell him, that he expected as good wheat from the seed of cockle , as he might expect that sowed the finest wheat;and that it would be all one whether we sowed or not , or whether our seed were good or bad , so we did but trust the mercies of an Almighty God, who could send us a great Harvest without so much cost and pains ; we should think him a vain man that should tell us, that he did not doubt but

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but in *one day* to do the *work* of a *whole life*: Or that, when he hath a very long journey to take, should affirm, that he had such a trust in the mercy of God, that he did not question but to perform his journey, though he fale still till the very last moment; expecting no less from Gods Omnipotence, than what the Jews tell us hapned by a miracle to *Jacob*, when he went from *Beersheba* to *Haran*; they tell Jon. and Hieus, that he went it in *rosol* in *Gen.* a day, and that the earth 28.

Vide Targum
between *Beersheba* and *Haran* did leap towards him to meet him, and so saved him the labour of footing it over. Such fools and madmen are we, we expect that Heaven should meet us, and save us the labour of any long pilgrimage: We look God should be so fond of us, as to be always working miracles for our sakes; and that when we will not be saved, that he should save us whether we will or not. We neglect our Seed-time, and re-

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gard not what our seed be; we will not learn the way to Heaven, nor fight the good fight, nor run the race till old age come upon us: Our souls are wounded, and we neglect a remedy, we have a great journey to go, and much work to do, and yet we loiter or sit still; as if Heaven were nothing worth, and our souls of no value, or as if it were the most easie thing to get to Heaven, though our Saviour say, *the gate is streight and the way narrow that leads to life, and that there be but few that find it*, Mat. 7.14. And certainly, we shall find it an harder matter to get to Heaven than we are aware of.

C H A P. V.

I come now to take off those Objections that either might or have been brought against what I have hitherto said.

Obj. I. The first I shall name, is that

that which we read at the beginning of the Common-Prayer-Book, before the late alterations made, cited from Ezek. 18. And the words as they lie in that Book of Common-Prayer are these. *At what time soever a sinner doth repent him of his sins from the bottom of his heart, I will put all his wickedness out of my remembrance, saith the Lord.* From whence some are ready to infer, that it will be all one whether we repent now or hereafter, nay farther, that we are not obliged to an early Repentance, but may delay it to the last moment, because it is said *At what time soever.* And this is too commonly objected by men of weak and corrupt minds, in defence of their delays. To which I answer,

First, that though Ezek 18. 21, 22. be cited for these words in that Book of Common-Prayer, yet if we look the words in the Prophet, we shall find some difference. For the words in Ezekiel run thus: *If the wicked shall*

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turn from all his sins that he bath committed , and keep all my Statutes: and do that which is lawful and right (note that well) *he shall surely live and not die.* So that in this place there is no promise of Pardon to a wicked man, unless *he turn from all his sins, and keep all Gods Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right.* And certainly, this imports a great deal more than a crying out for mercy. He must *forsake his way, and his thoughts too,* *Esa.55.7.* He must *restore the Pledge, and give again what he hath robbed,* and walk in the Statutes of life without committing iniquity, *Ezek. 33.15.* And therefore from these places can a man have no encouragement for his death-bed Repentance , for they loudly call for a good life and honest actions.

Secondly , I answer , though God have promised Pardon whensover we repent , yet he hath no where made a promise that he will follow that man with his grace which shall enable him

to

to repent, to his death-bed, who refuses and resisteth this offer of grace in the time of his health.

*Qui promisit
pænitenti veni-
am, non promisit
peccanti pæni-
tentiam.*

Lately, we must repent at the bottom of our heart before we can have this Pardon: Now we know our hearts are deceitful, and we have great reason to suspect our death-bed Repentance to be feigned and hypocritical. It was a Speech of a very worthy man, that, *be that will dissemble with God in his life-time, will dissemble with him in his death.* Mr. Greenham.

Obj. 2. But some will say, God does as well accept, and as amply reward the old mans late Repentance, as the early Repentance and Reformation of the young: He gave as great a reward to those that went into his Vineyard at the eleventh hour, as he did to those that went in more early, and that did endure the heat and burden of the day: As may appear from that Parable which we read, *Mat. 20.*

And

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And therefore there is no such need of an early Reformation, nor yet any such danger in a late or death-bed Repentance. To which I shall answer,

1. It is by no means evident, that this Parable was ever meant in any such sense as is supposed in this Objection. For our Saviour hath nowhere told us, that by the *eleventh hour* is meant *old Age*. Nor have we, that I know of, the least shadow of reason to understand it in such a sense: But the design of that Parable seems rather to be this, *viz.* to teach the Jews, who were Gods *first* people, that though God chose them *first* at the beginning of the world, yet would he now make his Name known to the Gentiles, according as was foretold of old, and this he would now do in the daies of the Messias, in the end of the World, or *The time of Christ, and of the Gospel, in which the Gentiles were to be called, may well* *the eleventh hour*: and that though the Jews would repine at this mercy of God towards the Gentiles, yet notwithstanding

withstanding their murmuring, (v. 11. God would call in the Gentiles, and accept of and reward their services as largely as he would the Jews. As God rewarded *Abraham*, *Moses* and *David*, and all holy men among the Jews in their several times, so would he also reward all good men, though Gentiles, in those last times.

of the Gospel. And so an Ancient Writer expounds these words, who expounds the householders going out early in the morning, to be meant of Gods calling his servants in the beginning of the world to *Noah*: The Labourers of the third hour, to be those in *Abraham's* time; of the sixth, about the time of *Moses*; the ninth, the times of the Prophets; the eleventh hour, the times

well be called here 'Εντάξης ὥρας, when it is elsewhere called 'Εχάτης ὥρας, 1 John 2. 18. And is very often called, the end of the World, the last days or time. Cor. 10.11. Heb. 1.2. Acts. 2. 17. 1. Pet. 1. 20. Heb. 9.26. Esa. 2.2..

Theophylact. in loc.

of Christ. And verily , if we duly weigh this interpretation, (which is neither new , nor yet singular) and very well ponder on the Antecedent and following words, and all the parts of the Parable it self, with other very many passages of the Scriptures, (which I must not now stand upon) and lay them well together , we shall find no considerable Objection against it.

Secondly , suppose that to be the meaning of the place , which is pretended in this Objection , that by the *eleventh hour* is meant *old age*, and by the other *hours* are meant, not the *Age* of the *World*, but the several *Ages* of Mans life , yet it is very evident that this place is of no force in this busi-
ness. For it is evident, that those men in the Parable , that went into the Vineyard at the *eleventh hour* , were not the same that were called or hired *early in the morning* , *at the third* , *sixth* , or *ninth hour* , For (1) Those that went in at the *eleventh hour*

were not called before , as they themselves tell the Houholder , when he asked them *wby they stood idle* : They say unto him , because no man hath hired us , v.7. That is, this was the first offer that was made to them , nor do we read that ever they refused to enter in when they were invited . But now the case with us is quite different , we are called upon from day to day , in our youth , in the early and first hours of our day , and we neglect and refuse , and delay our Repentance to our old age , and therefore cannot say with those in the Parable , No man hath hired us . But again (2) It is evident they were not the same men that went into the Vineyard at the eleventh hour , with those that were invited more early , because the Text tells us all along , and more particularly , v. 6. That the housholder at the eleventh hour , "Euper annis , found others standing idle ; from whence it is evident they were not the same that were hired before : And therefore for us , who are

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are called at the *third*, *sixth* and *ninth hour* of the day, to put off our work to the *eleventh*, is very unwarrantable. For it hath no warrantie from this place, nor is there one example in the Book of God to this purpose that may encourage us.

Obj. 3 But some will object the example of the Thief upon the Croſs, who though he were all his life-time a very great tinner, yet did he find mercy from Christ at the laſt, even a little before his death: And therefore why may he not also have mercy upon others, who never committed those sins, that that Thief might be thought guilty of.

But I shall make it appear, that we can have no encouragement from this example of the Thief to delay our Repentance, and yet to look for a Pardon at laſt, when we lie a dying. Our case is far different from his. For

First, it does not appear, that this Thief ever heard of Christ before, we never read that ever he delayed his repentance

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pentance to this time , nor have we the least appearance of reason to ground any such opinion upon : And therefore his case is not the same with ours, and so it makes nothing for our purpose or excuse. For we have not only heard of Christ , but professed our selves his followers before we lie a dying , and yet we delayed a timely repentence : Now what ground of hope can any man have from this example of the Thief , when he delays his repentence to the last , when it does not appear that ever the Thief , after he heard of Christ , did delay his at all.

Secondly , we have no reason to believe that our death-bed Repentance will be so sincere as this Thiefs was : Nay , we have too great reason to think it will not be so , for besides , that this Thief acknowledged Christ in his lowest condition , even then when our Saviour hung upon the Cross (which cannot be our case) and then expressed an effectual faith in him : Besides all this he manifested as true

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a Repentance and Faith , as that short space of time would give him leave. He acknowledged Christs innocence , his own guilt , and his trust in Christ for a future blessedness; further indeed he went not , nor could he after his first hearing of Christ , unless his life had been prolonged. But our Case is far different , for we after our knowledge of Christ despise and reject him. And therefore our Repentance is not like that Repentance of the Thief , unless it be in this , that it is *late* as well as his.

Thirdly , this is but one , and a very rare instance , the whole Book of God will not yield us such another example. This was a singular instance of mercy which Christ never intended

*Privilegium per-
sonale ad alios
non extenditur.*

*Justin. Inst. l.i.
Tit. 2. 8. 6.*

should be drawn into an example , or made into a Law : It was a personal priviledge and grace , which is therefore to be extended no farther than the person. To conclude an universal

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niversal and general law from one singular instance is very unreasonable: For any man to say, because this Thief was saved at the last breath, therefore he shall also, is extreamly weak and inconsequent, For besides our case is so far different from that of this Thief; we may as well, nay, more reasonably conclude our certain misery from the

Quod contra rationem juris receptum est, non est producendum ad consequentia.
Vide Tit. digest. de Reg: Juris.

example of the bad, as our happiness from the example of the good Thief. No man professing Christianity will have any ground to expect to fare as this Thief did. (1) Till Christ come into the world again, and (2) Suffer again also, and that (3) Between two Thieves, and (4) He be alive at that time, and (5) Place where he suffers, and (6) Be one of the Thieves; and (7) The good one too: Which thing I am sure will never come to pass.

Obj. 4. Some will say, God is Almighty,

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mighty , and can do what he pleases : His Hands are not tied , he can save an old sinner as well as an old Saint : Nothing is impossible to him . To which I answer

First , the question is not what God *can* do , but what he *will* , and what we have reason to expect he *should* . God can turn our *stones* into *bread* for us , and save us alive , though we cast our selves down from the highest rock or pinnacle . But yet we have no reason to expect these things when we are out of Gods way . As little reason have we to go on in our sins , and say , that God can save us notwithstanding , for the question being not what God *can* , but what he *will* do ; the Scriptures must resolve us in that ; and sure I am , from the Scripture we have no reason to think he will . But ,

Secondly , we have great reason to think he will not : What reason have we to think that God is so fond of us , that he will work *miracles* for us , when we despise the *means* ! Will he cause
the

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the Sun to stand still for us , because we have idled away our day ! Or do we think God is so in love with us, as to save us , whether we will be saved or not ! Hath not God told us , that if we live after the flesh we shall die , Rom. 8. 13. And do not the same Scriptures that tell us that God is Almighty , tell us also that he cannot lie or deny himself :

Obj. 3. But some may say , is not God merciful as well as strong : Are not his compassions as great as his power ! What pleasure then can he take in our death ! Or why should we limit or restrain his Mercies ? To which I Answer

First , that God is certainly very merciful , and delights not in our blood . We have sufficient experience of his mercy every day . It is his mercy that hath still kept us within the *hopes of Heaven* , and under the *means of grace* , and on this *fide* an *eternal death* : It is his mercy that he will accept of our repentance , and reward our sincere

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cere obedience: Had he desired our death he might have cut us off in the midst of our sins, and of our days, and given us a sad portion of things among those that are eternally miserable. This mercy the very damned in Hell have had, in the time of their life, a great experience of, and yet now are eternally lost, because this abundance of Gods goodness did not lead them to Repentance; which is a most evident Argument, that the destruction of those that did abuse and contemn the mercie of God, is no objection against Gods mercy. The sinner uses Gods mercie to evil purposes, and does by it as a shipwrack'd man does sometimes with a Plank, upon which he ventures so great a weight, as doth

"Οὐ γὰρ ἐν τῷ πράττειν κακοῖς εἰπενεπεντο, τελον ἐν τῷ πάχειν κακῶς ἐπιποθεσιν οἱ ἀγερωποι. Hier. in Carm. Pythag.

sink himself and it at once. There are they that would have no God at all, that they might escape unpunished: Others would have a God, but it is to right

right their cause. The Sinner would have a God that should be all *mercy*, that might *wink* at his *fol!ies*; the Sufferer whuld have a God of *Justice*, who might *avenge* his *injuries*: And every one would have what he thinks for his own turn : I know no other reason why men should make such an Objection as this from the goodness of God, which they would lay hold of to excuse them from an early Repentance, whereas indeed the goodness of God leads them to it. But

Secondly, God is just and holy as well as merciful: As the *mercy* of God forbears a while, so his *Justice* will punish us at last. It will be very *just*, that those should be condemned who will not be saved. That those should be destroyed who will not accept of Pardon. Do not tender Fathers disinherit rebellious

Dii immortales
plurimum pos-
sunt, sed non
plus velle no-
bis debent
quamparentes;
At parentes, si
pergimus er-
rare, suis bo-
nis nos exhæ-
redant. Metel.
apud A. Gell. l.
I. c. 6.

and

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and wicked Children, and bestow their substance on those that use it well! Certainly God will do no less by us if we go on to rebel against him. The very same Scriptures which tell us of his mercies tell us also of his Justice, and *that he will by no means clear the guilty.*

I know not what farther Objection can be brought against what I have said, but still I am ready to believe, that what hath been said will not be effectual to perswade the Reader to an *early Piety*, and a *seasonable Repentance*. Few men will be perswaded that their *dying hour*, and their *day of Accounts* are near at hand. It were well, if men could remember that death and Judgment are then many times the nearest to us when we think them farthest off. That servant that faith, *his Lord delays his coming*, shall find that *his Lord shall come in a day when he looketh not for him*, and in an *hour that he is not aware of*, Mat.24.50. Luke 13.35.17.26. We are secure ver-
ry

ry often when we are not *safe*. The old world little thought of a *flood*, when they gave themselves to eating, and drinking, and giving in marriage ; but the *waters* soon came down upon this *ungodly* world. The Sodomites little thought of a *fire*, and it rained *fire and brimstone* from heaven upon them : So shall it be when the Son of man comes : We shall deceive our selves till death undeceive us, and delude our selves with false hopes of a long life , till our Sand is all out , and time at an end. Certainly , many now in Hell little thought of *dying so soon*, much less of being *there tormented* after so short a life. The rich man in the Gospel little thought his soul should be taken from him *that night* , when he said to his soul , *thou hast goods laid up for many years* , Luk. 12. 19. Belshazzar little thought surely of the *expiration* of his *Life and Kingdom*, so suddenly , when he drank wine so securely in the Vessels of the Temple , Dan. 3. That which we least think
of

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of does often surprize and overtake us of a sudden: It is grown indeed to a Proverb, when we would express how little we think of a thing: We say, *We as little thought of such a thing, as we thought of our dying day.* It seems we think but little of it, but yet it comes quickly upon us whether we think of it or no.

C H A P. VI.

Let me then exhort you in the words of the Prophet, *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:* Let the wicked Vide Chald. Paraph. Kimchi & R. Solom. in loc. *fieri necesse est,*

Sed sapiendum est, & quidem mature; non enim nobis altera vita conceditur; ut cum in hac sapientiam quæramus, in illa sapere possimus; in hac utrumque fieri necesse est, cito inveniri debet ut cito suscipi possit, ne quid pereat ex vita cuius finis incertus est. *Laetant. Inst. l. 3. c. 16.*

forsake

forsake his way , and the unrighteous man his thoughts , and let him return unto the Lord , and he will have mercy upon him , and to our God , for he will abundantly pardon , Isa. 55.2,7. That is , we must seek him presently , before the decree be past , or our life wasted or consumed , as the Jews expound that place . We must be wise betimes , and not project to be wise only at the last cast , though we live in folly in the mean time : We must both seek this spiritual wisdom , and use it also in this life . But with what words shall I perswade this ? One would think , that what hath been said before , should be sufficient , if it were duly considered , and without that nothing will be sufficient . Yet I shall add some considerations , which if we duly attend unto , may not be unfit for the purpose in hand .

Consider then in the first place , and do it seriously , that your stay in this life cannot be long , but may be very short ; and that after this uncertain life is en-

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ed, the day of grace will be past with you, and you will have none of those terms of mercy offered which now you refuse. The day is far spent with many of us, and the night is at hand, in which no man shall work. Our time slides away apace, and with the very same pace do death and the grave, and the dreadful day of reckonings make their approaches to us. Twill be but a little time before our eyes shall be closed, and it shall be noised in the Neighbourhood that we are dead. When we have breathed a little longer, we shall breath our last. After a little longer stay, and traffick and journeys, after a few nights and days, or, at most, a few Winters and Summers; we shall be call'd off this stage by death, and brought to judgment, and then our streets and houses in a short time shall deny that they know us. Then shall all our thoughts perish, and then if we have not *repented in time*, we shall to no purpose *repent eternally*. We shall

shall be out of the reach of that mercy that now would gladly embrace us. We may then in vain call to the mountains and hills to cover us : We should therefore think upon how slender and weak a thread our eternal state does depend. We read of *Absalom*, that he hung by the head upon an Oak between heaven and earth , and whereas one would have thought he might have cut off his hair, and so made his escape ; one of the Jews tells us a tradition of the Rabbins, that *he drew his sword to cut off his hair, but that he saw underneath him Hell* R. Salomon in 2 Sam.18.9.

opened , which was ready to receive him. How true this Tradition is I examine not, but sure I am it well represents the danger of the impenitent man , who is at all times within an hairs breadth of everlasting burnings.

Consider secondly , how glad the damned in Hell would be of those offers of grace which we neglect and despise :

spise : Might they be taken out of their *beds of fire* , and placed again in the *cooler regions* of this world , and have such good terms of mercy promised them as we enjoy , how gladly would they embrace them? Would they choose rather to lie in their *flames* , than to forsake their *sins*? Did we well understand what it is to lie down in everlasting *burnings* , certainly we should not so securely go on in our sins.

Consider thirdly, what Answer can you make to God at the day of Judgment ; if you continue in your impenitence , and neglect your own salvation : What will you say when God shall demand of you why you idled away your day ; will you say , as those in the Parable ? *because no man hath hired us* , Mat 20.7. That we cannot, for God hath sent his Messengers that have told us both our *work* and *wages* , and beseeched us also to labour in Gods Vineyard. Will you say you had other things to mind first , your Merchandize , your Farms, and Yokes of

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of Oxen? That you cannot, for God had promised to provide us with all these things if we would first seek the Kingdom of Heaven. Will you say you were not able? That you cannot plead, for God offers his Spirit to enable you for your asking, *Luke 11. 13.* Will you say you did not think your time had been so *short*? But you had no assurance it should have been so *long*: What shall we say then? God hath *called* us, but we would not *bear him*: He hath *smitten* us, but we were not *humbled*: He shewed us *mercy*, but that would not *soften* us: He *threatned*, but we were not *afraid*: He *intreated* us, but we were not *perswaded*: He sent his *Embassadors*, but they could not *win* us: He told us the *danger*, but we would *venture*: He propounded a great *reward*, but we *neglected* it: He moved us by his *Spirit*, but we *grieved* his *Spirit*, *despised* his *threatnings*, *believed not* his *Word*: Whom shall we blame now? Not our Maker certain-

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ly : For he gave his Son to die. Not our Saviour , for he did not cast us off. Not our Teachers; for they called upon us daily. Not our own weakness ; for God was very ready to help us: Nor yet our want of time, for God was ready to provide for us, and we had time enough to spare in sports and pastimes , in pleasure and in sin, in doing nothing , and that which was nothing to the purpose. It will appear , our destruction was from our selves, and that our mouths will be stopped when God calls us forth at that great day of reckonings.

Consider fourthly ; how many and loud Calls you have to repent and return quickly: This is the voice of your heavenly Father , *Turn ye turn ye from your evil ways* , Ezek. 33. 11. And this was the doctrine of Jesus Christ the Son of God , *Mark i. 15.* And of the first Preachers of the Gospel , who call upon men every where to repent. This is the constant language of the *Spirit in the Scriptures*, and

and many times and very frequently in our *awakened consciences*, that we should repent quickly; every mercy of God calls upon us to Repentance, for the Apostle tells us, that *the goodness of God leads to Repentance*, Rom. 2.4. 2 Pet. 3.9. Our health and strength, our plenty and our wealth call upon us to return, and *repent*. And so do all the troubles and afflictions which we meet withal, they call upon us to *repent* also; the blasting of our corn, the casting of our Calves, our unseasonable Seeds-time, and our bad Harvest, the decay of our trade, and the loss of our Goods or good name, every sorrow and every sickness call upon us to *repent quickly*, and to *seek the Lord while he may be found*: So the holy Scripture tells us, *As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent*, Rev. 3.19. Nay, the judgments that befall other men also, they call upon us to *repent*. The *Galileans* blood that *Pilate* shed, and the death of those by the Tower of *Sion*.

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Ioam, these things preach to us that we must *repent* or *perish*, *Luke 13.3.5.* The waters of the *flood*, the fire of *Sodom*, the destruction of *Pharaoh*, the flames of the *City* and *Temple*, and all the other calamities of the poor *Israelites* call upon us to *repent*. The overthrow and ruin of Families, of Cities and Provinces, whether by Plague or Fire, Sword or Famine, call upon us to *repent*. In a word every sad calamity of our Neighbour; every astonishing Providence that befalls him, preaches Repentance to us aloud, and calls upon us to *repent* before the same, or greater Plagues than these do overtake us.

וְשׁוּב may, it is thought, be as well translated *Repent* as *Return*, which latter makes the sense more ambiguous in this place.

And that may be the meaning of what we read in the Psalmist, *Thou turnest men to destruction*; That is, thou inflictest great calamities upon men, and sayest, *return ye children of men*, that is, thou givest

givest men warning by these judgments to Repent and Return from the evil of their ways. The many judgments of God in the world are so many loud warnings to the sinner to return and repent.

Consider in the next place , that God is ready to receive thee , and to embrace thee upon thy Repentance , how many or great soever thy sins have been : He that repents shall be welcome unto God : That God, whom we serve , does not delight in our death, but is greatly pleased that we shoule return and live.

There shall be joy in Heaven over one sinner that repents , Luke 15. So our blessed Saviour hath told us more than once in that most comfortable Chapter, where we shall find this truth variously exemplified to us. When the Prodigal son was coming home, *When he was a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fel-*

*Hec tu peccato
tor, bono animo
sis, videt ubi
de tuo gaudia
tutur. Tert. de
poenitent.*

on his neck and kissed him: And he makes merry for his son when he comes home , as we may read in that Chapter : Come then , poor sinner , come whiles God calls thee , and he will bid thee welcom : Come thou great sinner , that hast heaped one sin upon another , thou old sinner that hast lived many years in sin: Come thou burdened and weary sinner , Christ *will give thee rest* : He will in *no wise cast thee out* , Mat. ii. 28. John 6. 37. Thou wilt make joy in Heaven , a great joy among the Angels of God , nay , God himself waits for it , and will be greatly pleased at thy *Return*. Thy sins , how great or many soever , shall be blotted out , thy Name shall be enrolled in the Book of life , among the Friends of God and Citizens of Heaven , and thou shalt at length sit down with *Abraham* and *Isaac* ; and all the holy men and Angels of God to eternal Ages. Come away then , O sinner , stay no longer among the Swine , feed no longer on the husks ,
the

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the Garlick and Onyons, leave off thy sins, and foolish pleasures and turn unto thy God: He is ready to meet thee, and thy Saviour to embrace thee: God hath sent his Ministers to tell you, that the supper is ready, and he hath sent us out to call in the *poor and maimed*, *the halt and blind*, that is, he hath given us commission to call in the vilest and unworthiest sinners, and to assure them that they shall be welcom, *Luke 14.16*. And therefore in the name of God I call you, and I do it again and again. Turn unto the Lord, O sinner, and thou shalt live and not die, God never sent away a repenting sinner without mercy: *Draw nigh unto God and he will draw nigh unto you*, *Jam. 4. 8.* The devil will be apt to perswade thee that God will not accept thee, that he will not pardon and that he hath no mercy for such an one as thou art; when he cannot ruine thee by *Security*, he will endeavour to do it by *despair*: But believe him not, for God will receive thee unto

unto mercy , if thou do unfeignedly turn to him. Hear rather what God says himself: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked , but that the wicked turn from his way and live : Turn ye, turn ye , from your evil ways , for why will ye die , O House of Israel :* Ezek.33.11.

Where God doth not only say it , but

confirms it with an

*O nos miseri-
mes, sinec juran-
ti Domino crea-
dimus. Tert. de
Poenitent.*

*Oath also, that we might
have a strong consolation,
who have fled for refuge
to lay hold upon the hope
set before us , Heb. 6.*

18. How wretched are we if we do not believe God when he swears by himself , and the thing it self is so ver-
ry evident and plain ! If God had de-
sired our death , he might have de-
stroyed us long ago , what could have
hindred the Almighty ! He might
have sent the Sinner to Hell from the
last *drunken meeting* : The last time he
let Oaths flie out of his mouth , he
mighthave presently stopp'd his mouth
with

with fire and brimstone , and thrown him into everlasting burnings : The mercy of God hath kept him from being consumed : And all the patience and forbearance of God hath abundantly testified that he *stayed* for his *Conversion*, but *delighted* not in his death.

Consider in the next place this also, that if you neglect to repent now, and to secure your souls , that this exhortation will bear witness against you at that great day. And how sad will it be , that that which was intended for your *Conversion* , and *eternal welfare* , should turn to your *Confusion*. This will be worth our serious reflection. When we lie a dying , or when we appear before our Judge , and our Consciences are throughly awakened, this reflection will appall our hearts , and wofully perplex us. When we remember, that in our health we were told of these things , and intreated earnestly to *seek the Lord while he might be found* , and when we consider how securely we neglected this exhortation

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exhortation, and put God off from time to time, till at last time was no more, how will such thoughts as these amaze and confound us? Go now to a man that lies a dying, who hath thus dealt with God, and if he be awakened before he dies, he will tell you a sad story: *Alas (will be say) wretched man that I am, who shall now help me?* I have been often told of death and judgment, and of the wrath of God against all unrighteousness, and frequently called upon to repent, and seek the face of God betimes: But I have put these thoughts far from me; I have followed my lusts, my sports and worldly business, and made my heart so bard, that the mercies of God, nor the terrors of the Almighty could overcome it; and now I see nothing before me, but the bottomless pit, and an unspeakable sorrow? O that I could now redeem the hours which I have spent in doing nothing, or in doing wickedly: O that I had that time which I spent in Taverns and Plays, in dressing and courting, in foolish

foolish diversions and impertinent visits, after the honours, and pleasures, and profits of the world ; how could I now spend them in the house of Prayer, and the exercises of Religion ? Thus do many wretched creatures bewail themselves upon their uneasy beds ; Some indeed that never make such complaints , there are , although they have lived very wickedly , yet these mens eyes are opened when they approach their Judge; and are awaked with the flames of Hell about them. Now certainly , as we would not be thus extreamly miserable , it will concern us to think of these things before they come to pass : And would it would please the Almighty so effectually to put these thoughts in our hearts now , that hereafter we might not be confounded and overwhelmed with them.

Consider lastly , what I said and proved before , that you must *repent or perish*, *That unless you be born again you can never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,*

Heaven. You will never see God hereafter without an *inherent* and *universal holiness* here ; Should I teach you any other doctrine I should be a most notorious *deceiver*, and a false *Prophet*. Nay should an Angel from Heaven preach any other doctrine , we ought not to believe him. This is the *peculiar eminence* of Christian Religion , as well as the undeniable Argument of the truth of it , that it does indispensibly require an holy life in order to a future happiness : And whatever doctrine or Religion doth dispense with this ; we may safely conclude it never came from God : It is true indeed , that the lives of most men , and the doctrines of very many , would seem to insinuate that this is *not true* : but sure I am , the *life* , and *doctrine* of our blessed Saviour teach us no less. And if we make that our rule , we shall be eternally deceived and undone , if we do not become *new creatures*. Nothing less than this will serve your turn at the *long run* : And therefore choose whether

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whether you will *repent* or *perish*; part with thy *sins*, or with thy *God*, thy *soul*, thy *hopes of Heaven*, and whatever ought to be most dear unto thee: The *Religion of Jesus Christ* is a straignt inclosure, which hath no *Posterns* to let in false people at. Here is no *indulgence* or *dispensation* to be had, which might give a certain *Supersedeas* from the labours and necessities of an holy life. All that pass into Heaven must go through that *narrow* gate which leads into it.

C H A P. VII.

And now I might have done, one would think, and conceive good hopes that you would no longer halt between two opinions; but that every man should strike his own breast, and sadly think what he hath done, and set

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set upon an effectual and speedy Reformation. To the doing of which we have very great Arguments to move and perswade us , as appears by what hath been said above. But yet because we are easily obstructed and kept from so holy and good a work , I shall , before I make an end , shew what are those usual *bindrances* that *keep* , and so greatly entangle men , that they do not proceed to a speedy and effectual reformation and amendment of life.

The first *Hindrance* I shall name, is this : Men say they are *not able* to *repent* and *amend* of themselves , and therefore in vain do we exhort them to it. They can do nothing , they say , which is good : There is a *spiritual Cramp* upon them , by which they are disenabled to move towards any thing of amendment of life. This doctrine they have been taught , and they are willing to believe it most true. I shall therefore examine the truth of this pretence. And

i. I observe the forwardness and folly.

folly of these men who plead this excuse; when they are exhorted to repent, they say they *cannot*, but yet at other times they put off their repentance to the hour of death and in so doing they suppose they *can repent* when they will: When they *sin*, they say it is but *repeating*, and all will be well; but when they are called upon to do that *speedily* and *effectually*, then they pretend it is *impossible*. Sometime they suppose it a *very easie thing*, and another while altogether *above their power*.

2. It is very plain, that the great fault lies in our *will*; and not in the *want of power*, however we may deceive our selves. This will be made appear at the day of Judgment to every one of our faces: Nay, this may easily be made evident now also. For (1) That God commands things *absolutely impossible*, is a doctrine very false, of whomsoever we have learned it, and hath of old been thought a pernicious doctrine. For who sees not, if this

*Exercitamus
eorum blasphemiam qui dicunt impossibile ali-
quid homini à Deo praeceptum esse, &c. Hier.
epist. ad Damascum.*

this were true, that the Gospel would then be of no use at all, if it did only oblige us, and not help us; if it commanded things impossible to be done, and should there leave us to an inevitable destruction:

But the fault lies in our will: For (2) If we were willing and resolved, we should not sit still and say we could not amend, but we would try our utmost whether we could or not: At least we (3) Should carefully use those means which God hath appointed for our salvation. Though we cannot work Grace in our hearts, yet we can hear Gods Word, and read it, and be frequent in the house of Prayer: The sick man cannot labour in his Fields, but yet he can take Phylick, use a good diet, and follow the rules of his Physician, and by that means may become strong to labour again. (4) However we should not be so well contented

contented in this condition, if there were not a fault in our *will*.

3. Though we *cannot* alone, yet with *Gods help* we may amend our hearts and ways : We say , *a man can do that which he can do by the help of his friends*: God is as willing to help us as a *tender father* to help a *child* carry that burden which he sees too heavy for him. It is a most true saying , that *He that sets himself upon amendment of life , will find help from Heaven.* This

*Qui se ad mun-
dationem accin-
git, adjuvatur
caelitus.*

is a very certain truth, that a Christians power and assistance is at least equal to his work , God is not so hard a Master as to command us things absolutely impossible : I shall therefore prove , that if men will make use of that power which God hath provided, they will have no reason to complain. For it will appear , that God hath commanded nothing , but what he is very ready to help us to perform, so that if hereafter we miss of Heaven , we

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we shall have reason only to blame our selves. For if Gods *commands* are *hard* and *difficult*, yet his *assistances* and *helps*, if made use of, are very *great* and *considerable*. The Gospel does not only *command*, but it *enables* us to *obey*. It does not only *require obedience*, but it also *gives grace*. It doth indeed *expect much from us*, but then it doth *bestow as much*. I shall therefore name those helps and powers which God hath provided us withal.

(1.) He hath promised the *assistance* of his *Holy Spirit*, and this must needs be a very great and effectual assistance. And God hath assured us that he will bestow his Spirit on them that ask him, as readily as a Father will give bread to his Child that begs it of him: Nay, more readily, for if earthly Parents will give good gifts unto their Children, *How much more shall our Heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Luke 11. 13. No promise can be more plain,

plain, none can be more comfortable than this is. And if therefore we do but *humbly* and *heartily* beg this holy Spirit; as an hungry Child cries for bread: if we do not *quench his motions*, nor *grieve his presence*, we shall not only obtain him, but we shall find his assistance very effectual. We shall have no cause to complain that we are weak and feeble, no reason to fear that our sins should be too hard for us; But we shall find, *that he that is in us, is greater than he that is in the world*, i John 4. 4. That is, we shall find the Holy Spirit which is in us, not only enabling us to support, but to vanquish and overcome the Devil and all his Powers, Fear not then, but remember who is on thy side, and that God provides for thy security. Be not dismayed at the Devil and all his Host, the Spirit of the Almighty, that Holy Spirit of power, is engaged on thy side. I will speak to you in the words of the Prophet *Isaiah*, *Fear not, O Jacob, my Servant, and thou Jeshurun*

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Jeshurun whom I have chosen : For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty , and floods upon the dry ground : I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed . and my blessing upon thy off-spring , Isa. 44. 2, 3. A Christian hath greater strength than he is aware of , a greater power engaged for him than against him. Indeed he is apt to be afraid and to despise, but that is because he does not know his own strength. The Prophets servant was more afraid than he needed, when his Master was besieged, but the good Prophet bids him not fear , for they that be with us , says he , are more than they that be with them , 2 King. 6. 16. and his servant saw it too when his eyes were opened. It is just so with the weak Christian, the Devil persuades him he hath great Armies and Hosts against him , but if his eyes were open , he would see his strength greater than his enemies. If God be with us , who can be against us ? Now the holy Spirit of God will help us mightily , if we humbly
beg

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beg his aid , and cherish his motions
and sincerely follow his guidance and
his conduct.

2. Another help , and very great
encouragement which the Christian
hath , is the consideration of the life
and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.
That great example which he hath
left us will be of very great moment to
our amendment , if we do but duly
reflect upon it. The sight of this
brazen Serpent one would think, should
cure our distempers , and heal the
corruption of our natures. The great
example of our Lord , were it always
before our eyes , how would it ani-
mate and encourage us in our Christian
course ! Methinks we should adven-
ture on that path which our Lord hath
walked in before us : We should not
be afraid of those difficulties which our
Lord hath overcome : Nor be dismaid
at those troubles and enemies , which
the Captain of our salvation , did most
undauntedly despise and conquer. It
is a great encouragement to the com-

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mon souldier to see his General engage himself in the greatest dangers , and to triumph over them ; such an example shews him at once what he *may* do , and what he *ought*. And verily , the example of our blessed Saviour should have the same influence upon us : How can we be *proud* , when he was *meek* , and *lowly* in heart ! Why should we *complain* , when he was *patient* even unto death ! We may well *forgive an enemy* , when our Saviour prays , *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* , and well may we be *contented* with our condition when we remember the words of our Saviour , when he was about to drink the most bitter cup , *Not my will, but thy will be done.*

3 Another help the Christian hath is , the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven for him: Did he rightly consider Jesus Christ at the right hand of his Father, he would not certainly be thus feeble hearted. This consideration would add a mighty vigour

gour , new strength and courage to every drooping Christian , and to every young Convert . Though our Saviour died upon the Cross , yet he revived again , and is yet alive , and appears before God on our behalf : *He is able to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God by him , seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

Hear this for thy great comfort thou hast an High Priest in Heaven , one that can pity and compassionate thee , and one that will help and succour thee : One that knows thy wants , and pities thine infirmities : *We have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities , but was in all points tempted like as we are.* And in that be himself suffered , being tempted , he is able to succour them that are tempted , Heb.

14. 15. 2. 18. These words bring with them a very great consolation to the drooping sinner : He is not left alone , and forsaken , God is with him : His blessed Saviour hath been

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tempted himself , and even now is very mindful of those that are tempted.

The next *Hindrance* I shall name is this, which some men may be ready to stumble at. They judge thus , if God have elected and chosen them , his Decree shall stand , and they shall certainly be saved at last : But , say they , if God hath passed us by , then all our endeavours will be to no purpose. And therefore we shall not need be solicitous about such matters as are already fixed and determined by the unalterable Counsel of God , and who hath resisted his will ?

And thus does the devil miserably cheat and delude the poor sinner , by his strange reaches and artifices. Now I shall say something to this pretence in these following Severals.

I. It is certain that Gods decree is not the rule of our life , but his written Word and declared Will. If we open our Bible we shall find that , *He that believes shall be saved.* This is the

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the language of the Holy Scriptures : 'Tis a great piece of pride and folly in us, to be gazing on high for our direction, when our way lies so plainly before us. We need not climb into Heaven to make a search, whether or no we are enrolled in the Book of life. *The word is nigh thee , if thou shalt confess with thy mouth , the Lord Jesus , and shalt believe in thine heart , that God hath raised him from the dead , thou shalt be saved , Rom 15.7, 8, 9.* If we repent and believe the Gospel, it will go well with us at the last and great day; but if we live and die in our sins, we shall be unavoidably miserable: If we obey the Gospel, no decree of God will shut us out of Heaven. And if we continue in our sin and unbelief, no decree of his will bring us thither.

2. It is agreed on all hands, that there is no decree of Bishop Dave-
God shuts up a man nunt against under a necessity of fin-
ning and being damned. Sin does not
H oord.c.2.

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follow from Gods passing a man by, as an effect flows from its proper and true cause , and therefore a mans damnation cannot flow from it.

3. And therefore at the day of judgment , the sentence of Condemnation will not lay hold upon men, because *they were not elected*, but because *they were wicked, and did not obey the Gospel.* It shall be said to the wicked at that day , *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire , &c,* And wherefore is it ? Not because they were inevitably decreed to it, but for their own wickedness, as it follows, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink , &c.*

4, If Gods decree were to be our rule, no man could have any ground at all for his faith , and the Gospel would be a most uscless and ineffectual thing, which would be most absurd to believe. For we know that there is in the Gospel the greatest ground for every mans *faith* and *hope* that

that is imaginable : We have great encouragement to receive the mercy which God offers us by his son ! If we do not shut our selves out , our Saviour doth not exclude us. The Gospel opens a large door of hope , if we do not shut it upon our selves. *Him that cometh to me , says our Saviour , I will in no wise cast out , John 6. 37.* Did our Saviour put any bick , because they were not *elected* , and therefore he could not receive them ? Did he require any more than this , that they should *repent* and *obey the Gospel* ? If he be so *merciful* as not to shut us out , why should we be so *cruel* as to exclude our selves ? Did the Apostles and first Preachers of the Gospel , require any more of their Converts but faith and repentance ? Was not this all that *Philip required of the Ethiopian Eunuch , and St. Paul of the Goaler* that they should believe in the Lord Jesus ? *Acts 8. 36,37. 16. 30,31.* No man that believes shall miscarry ; and there

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is in the Gospel all possible encouragement for our faith.

And therefore we ought not to make the way to Heaven more narrow than it is , and to ruine our selves by our groundless fears, when our *duty* is so *plain* , and our *encouragement* so *great*. It will well become us to work whilst it is day , before we are buried in an eternal darkness : If we sit still whiles our time spends, and our day makes hast from us; if we dispute over our work , and neglect to do it , we shall soon sit down in everlasting sorrows. 'Tis a sign we neither love our work nor yet our Master , when we are so easily discouraged from it. Sure I am , that he which values his life , will take care how to preserve it though he should believe the term of it *fixed* and not *moveable* : For certain it is , that he will die if he sit still and do nothing , and so shall we also if we be not wise betimes.

Another *Hindrance* is this. Men are not willing to repent as yet , because

cause they look upon Religion as a very hard saying , a Melancholick and very grievous discipline : And however it may become sage , and aged persons , it is not thought fit for the active and the young , who must not look to see a good day ever after . This generally is the pretence of young persons against a Religious life ! I shall desire these men to consider impartially these following things .

1. Whether it be not a very unjust thing that those men should pass this censure upon Religion , that never made any trial of it ? 'Tis very unequal that the same man should be both Accuser and Judge : And that a man should condemn before he hath convicted : Now this is the pretence of the profane and irreligious , who have no reason to pronounce against Religion , which they have had no experience of . *A blind man is an incompetent Judge of colours* , but yet not more incompetent than these men in the matters of Religion : Christ himself will not escap

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a severe sentence, if Pontius Pilate may be allowed to be the Judge, and his enemies his Accusers.

2. Let us consider which is the harder saying of these two, Repent or Perish; Repent or lie down in everlasting burnings. Which is the bader saying of these two, Repent or believe the Gospel, Mark 1. 15. Or, depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, Mat. 25.

1. Certainly, the sinner that shall fall into the hands of Gods Justice, will find no sorrow like that sorrow: And though he may now think Repent an hard saying, yet he will find Depart ye cursed very much harder. The people thought Solomon's an heavy yoke, but that was light to that which they must expect from his Son, whose little finger would be bigger than his Fathers Loins. We must bear the yoke of Christ, or, the chains of darkness: We must return unto God by a new life, or else be turned into Hell with all the nations that forget God.

3. The injunctions of Sin and Satan are *hard sayings* also , nay , *harder* than the exercise of Religion ; and therefore the sinner hath no reason to use this pretence. Men serve an hard Master when they serve the Devil or their own lust ; and yet this they do without complaining , though they command them unreasonable and contradictory things , and in stead of rewarding them for their pains , deprive them of their innocence , their peace and comfort , the favour of God , and the hopes of Heaven. And yet we complain that God is an hard Master , though he both *reward* us , and *help* us to *do* our work. Did we serve God as industriously as we serve the Devil and the world , we might be happy with the same pains that now we are miserable. It is no small pains the sinner many times is at to be undone. He diggs his Grave , aye , and makes his way to Hell with no small difficulty. We can take any *pains* to be *miserable* , but will take none to be *happy*.

happy. If the thing were rightly considered, there is more of *pain* in a dissolute life, than in a Religious, in

*"Ἐγενα σαρκὸς
σίμη ἀπαγγεῖ
ἐπιγνωσίας καὶ
βασιλῆα τὰ
χορτα Theo-
phylact. in Cal.
5. 22.*

the *works* of the *flesh*, than in the *fruits* of *righteousness*, and of the *Spirit*. When the Apostle reckons up good and evil works, the good he calls the

fruits of the *Spirit*,

which is very kindly expressed; but the evil he calls the *works* of the *flesh*; as it is thought, to let us know the *difficulties and labours of a sinful course*,

Gal. 5. 19. — 22. — And certainly, if we would be at the pains to consider it, we should find that those *fruits* of the *Spirit* are much more easie and joyous than the *works* of the *flesh*. Let us but compare them a little, and we shall find it true. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* What is there here that will put us to any pain

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pain or sorrow : Nay , they afford us much quiet, and are attended with an ease that the works of the flesh will not admit of : Now among the works of the flesh he reckons *Adultery* , *Hatred* , *Variance* , *Strife* , *Sedition* , *Envynings* , *Murders* , *Drunkenness* , and *Revellings*. Now what sorrows do not these things bring upon us ? Who can express the sorrows and *pain* of *Adultery* and *Drunkenness* ! the torments of *Envie* ! the *turmoils* and *confusions* that come from *Strife* and *Seditions* ! the *uneasiness* of *Hatred* and *Variance* ! and the very *Hell* which he lets into his soul , who is guilty of *Revellings* and *Murders* ; will any man believe that *Drunkenness* is easier than *Temperance* , or that *love* hath as much of pain as *hatred* and *Envie* ; or that the *chaste* meet with as many sorrows as the *Adulterer* doth ? May not any one perceive , that *joy* and *peace* , and *gentleness* and *meekness* , are much more pleasant than *Variance* and *Revellings* , *Seditions* and *Murders*.

So

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So that the sinner hath no reason to use this pretence against Religion: for 'tis but a cheat and delusion, 'tis a false report brought up by a wicked Spie. The Devil does by Christian Religion as the old Heathens did by Christians. They put them into the skins of wild beasts, and then they worried them. He misrepresents a most excellent Religion, and then his instruments assault it. But certainly the sinner in the mean time will be left without excuse, he is afraid of that which would not hurt him. And those that have been industrious in the service of God can tell him, that they can find no fault with their Master or their work.

4 Let him that thinks Religion so great a slavery, look at the end of it. 'Tis great wisdom to consider the end of a matter, how it closes and shuts up. We use to say, *We must not praise a fair day till night.* And it was wisely answered of him, that was asked his opinion of two persons, whom

whom he thought the happier , when he replied , *that it could not be known which was the happier man till they were dead.* That is well that ends so: Who would not die the death of the righteous , and who would not desire that his latter end might be like his ? We see but the *saddest part of Religion* in this World , the more *lightsom* part remains for us , when we shall be added to the Spirits of just men made perfect. Now we have the bitterest draught , our Saviour keeps the best wine to the last. The Devil does not do thus. He deals with us as *Jael* did by *Sisera* , who gave him fair words , covered him with a Mantle and gives him milk to drink in his thirst: But she conceals the Nail and the Hammer wherewith she opened a way for his soul to flie out. Thus the Devil does with us , he tells us fair stories of what he will give us , if we will be his servants , but he hides the hook under his bait , he says nothing of the hammer and nail , of the instruments of death which wait for us. Ano-

Another *Hindrance* is a misunderstanding of the design of Christs Death , and an ill use which we make of it. The most wicked and dissolute will say , he hopes to be saved by the blood of Christ , who died for sinners , and therefore they think they have no more to do , but strongly to rest themselves upon the blood of Jesus , and by that means excuse themselves from an obedience to the Laws of Christ. But:

1. They make an ill use of the death of Christ that encourage themselves in their sins for Christ died not only to deliver us from the *guilt* and *punishment* , but also from the *Power* and *Dominion* of our sins. *He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works :* Tit. 2. 14. It is true indeed , *There is now no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.* But who

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who are they? *Who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit,* Rom. 8.

I.

2. It is certain , that whatever Christ hath suffered , will do us no good unless we own him to be our Lord and Saviour , unless we repent and believe the Gospel , that is, unless that we perform the condition of the New Covenant. For though Christ have done his part in order to our recovery , yet he hath not done ours also : He hath left us something to do ; viz. to perform the condition of the Gospel. We must have a Faith and Repentance , or else we shall be excluded from the mercy of the Gospel. Now we cannot be said to believe in Christ unless we do obey him, unless we receive him as our Lord : otherwise we have but fancy for

Quid est igitur
fides? Opinor
fideliter ho-
minem Christo
credere, i.e.,
fidelem Deo
esse, h. e. fi-
deliter Dei
mandata ser-
vare. *Salu-*
de Gub. *Dei*
l. 2.

faith.

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faith. What says the Scripture in this matter ? It tells us , that *Christ being made perfect* (or being consecrated by his death on the Cross , as the *Jewish Priests* were consecrated by the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*) he became the *Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*, *Heb. 5. 9.* Our Saviour tells us plainly , *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : And he that believeth not* (or as it may be very well ren-

*'G dñs dwv
Quinon pa-
ret Casiat.* dred ,) *he that obey-
eth not the Son shall not
see life ; but the wrath
of God abideth on him,*

John 3. 36.

Another great Hindrance is our worldly affairs and business. Our Farms and Yokes of Oxen ; the cares of this world , and the deceitfulness of riches , are the great enemies to Religion and Amendment of life. This covetousness made *Judas* betray our Saviour , and the Pharisees deride him , and *Demas* forsake him , and the

young

young man go from him sorrowful, the Gadarens weary of him, and the wicked world persecute him in his followers.

But let such men consider, how sad a bargain it will be to gain the world, and lose their soul. Nothing can make amends for such a loss:

We read of one *Lysimachus* a King, who was forced to resign his Kingdom to his enemies for something to allay his heat, and satisfie his thirst, who when he drank, complained of his own calamity,

Plutarch. de his
qui sero à nu-
minis fun.

*Who for so short a pleasure
should be deprived of so great a King-
dom.* Well may the sinner cry out then, who for a little wealth or honour in this world, hath not only deprived himself of an eternal Kingdom, but must lie down also in endless sorrows. How infinitely will this perplex him hereafter, when he shall be in the regions of darkness and of sorrow, to think that he should, in pursuit of the world, lose his soul,

and

and that at once lose his soul and the world too.

Another Hindrance is an opinion that our sins are greater than can be forgiven : They have continued so long in their great and heinous sins, that they fear they are not now within the reach of mercy. But such a man must know,

1. That Gods thoughts are not as our thoughts. He tells us, *if the wicked forsake his way, he will have mercy upon him, and he will abundantly pardon.* For, says he, *my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.* Isa. 55. 7, 8. And certainly there is not less mercy in the Gospel, than there was under the Law, but more. Those sins which under the Law could not be expiated, will under the Gospel upon our faith and repentance be forgiven. This is very evident, and St. Paul tells us no less in these words, *By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified*

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justified by the Law of Moses, Act. 13.39;

2. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to Repentance. He came to heal those that were sick. The more sensible we are of our sins, and spiritual maladies, the more need have we of a Saviour, and the greater assurance that he will receive us. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Mat. 11.28.* And him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out, *John 6.37.* Thy sins must not discourage thee from coming to Christ, who came into the world for such, and hath received as great sinners as thou art, as you may see *1 Cor. 6. 11.* Such were some of you, but you are washed, &c. If thy sins be as scarlet, yet if thou art ready to part with them, they shall become as white as snow, *Isa. 1. 16, 17, 18.*

The last Hindrance, and I fear, the most common, is the neglect of the ordinary means of grace. *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*

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God, Rom. 10. 17. But some are so prophane , and some so proud that they will not hear at all: And for those that do , yet they take no care how they hear: They neither prepare before hand , nor attend in the service , nor yet consider of it afterwards. The Preacher is looked on as *Lot* was by his Sons. *As one that mocks.* And though God have written , and we preach the great things of the Law , they *are counted as a strange thing, Hos. 8. 12.* We hear indeed , but we go away and forget what manner of persons we were ; we go away , not the wiser , nor the better for it : And that because we came thither with no hearty desires to get more knowledge or more grace: Should God make a search in one of our Assemblies , and proceed from highest to the lowest, he would , I fear, find but few among us that had been upon our knees before we came together to ask his blessing upon his Word: Few that come with any longing

ing desires after the sincere milk of Gods Word, that they might grow thereby. Perhaps some might be found that could not tell for what end they were come together. And so long as we are thus careless and remiss in those things which God hath appointed for our Salvation, 'tis no wonder we proceed to no Reformation.

F I N I S.

